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**Pragmatic innovation in curriculum  
development: a study of physical  
education teachers' interpretation  
and enactment of a new curriculum  
framework.**

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**2016**



**Declaration**

I hereby declare that I, Andrew Horrell have composed this thesis, informed and acting on the counsel of my supervisors. It has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Signed:

Date:



## **Acknowledgements**

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taken the time to share ideas and to engage in productive dialogue. All of these interactions have helped me to complete this final element of my degree.

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I have been very fortunate to have been taught by caring, thoughtful teachers and lecturers during my academic career. I love learning and continue to inquire about the world around me. This study is dedicated to all the teachers and lecturers who changed my life through their work.

Andrew Horrell

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## **Abstract**

There is an assumption that the ways in which teachers engage with policy are known, yet there is very little evidence to demonstrate how teachers engage with new policies and how this engagement patterns their approach to curriculum development (Kulinna, Brusseu, Cothran, & Tudor-Locke, 2012). Previous research has not clearly distinguished between teachers' understanding of policy discourses and their subsequent enactment of curriculum. An opportunity to do so arose with the introduction in Scotland of a new curriculum. This new curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)*, intended to provide a framework within which teachers would exercise professional judgment and engage in School Based Curriculum Development (SCBD). The Scottish Government determined the overarching policy for education and Local Authorities were responsible for overseeing the development of the curriculum. CfE intended to empower teachers by encouraging innovation with the proviso that key experiences deemed to be central for pupil learning were addressed.

This study aimed to provide insights into the process of SBCD in physical education as teachers prepared for the first year of teaching CfE. The research questions therefore focused on developing an understanding of how the lead teachers tasked with designing the physical education curriculum, within a newly formed curriculum area of *health and wellbeing*, had engaged



with policy and enacted the curriculum. In order to gain a fine-grained understanding of curriculum leaders' experiences of SBCD, this study drew its sample from a single local authority. The study adopted a research design of repeated interviews with nine teachers who led curriculum development in their respective schools.

Two related orders of SBCD as reported and experienced by curriculum leaders emerge from the study: first order SBCD pertains to the process of engagement with policy discourses; and second order refers to the activities associated with the enactment of the curriculum. The findings reported in this thesis showed that events organised by the local authority to support teachers led to the development of a professional learning community which facilitated teachers' active engagement in SBCD. This active engagement required careful tailoring of new developments to the constraints and affordances of their individual schools. First order SBCD was a complex process of engagement/active interpretation and reinterpretation of policy as teachers considered the context for SBCD. These processes led to teachers viewing the broad aims of CfE as a reinforcement of existing practice and curricula. Discourses of accountability appear to have had the most influence in curriculum design decisions, overshadowing the discourses of health and wellbeing within CfE. Teachers' professional judgements were influenced by regimes of accountability at national and local levels which patterned but did not determine schools' and teachers' responses. This is because second

order SBCD reflected teachers' perceptions that a wholesale transformation of physical education was not required or possible within the constraints of their contexts. Curriculum leaders concentrated their efforts on covering the *broad aims* of CfE and the 'experiences and outcomes' outlined in CfE through focusing on their approach to teaching and learning the existing physical education curricula. Thus, they saw health and wellbeing as only one element of physical education rather than as the key focus of their enactment of the curriculum. Teachers' collective efforts at curriculum enactment were therefore depicted as *pragmatic innovation* as this encapsulates their responses to policy discourses as they developed a curriculum that would in their view effectively address the broad aims and purposes of CfE while taking account of the constraints of their local context.

In contrast to preceding work, a more nuanced account of teacher agency is revealed; teachers were neither wholly the subject of policy discourse nor were they wholly free agents. It follows that if policymakers are seeking transformational change in physical education and an orientation of the subject towards health and wellbeing, there is a need not only for mechanisms to support professional learning, but also for regimes of accountability such as the inspection framework to reflect the policy aims of health and wellbeing more closely.



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## Chapter 1

### 1.1 Introduction

There is an assumption that the ways in which teachers engage with policy are known, yet there is very little evidence to demonstrate *how* teachers engage with new policies and how this engagement patterns their approach to curriculum development (Kulinna, Brusseau, Cothran, & Tudor-Locke, 2012). Previous research has not clearly distinguished between teachers' understanding of policy discourses and their subsequent enactment of curriculum. An opportunity to do so arose with the introduction in Scotland of a new curriculum. This new curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE<sup>1</sup>), intended to provide a framework within which teachers would exercise professional judgment and engage in School Based Curriculum Development (SBCD). The Scottish Government determined the overarching policy for education and Local Authorities were responsible for overseeing the development of the curriculum. CfE intended to empower teachers by encouraging innovation with the proviso that key experiences deemed to be central for pupil learning were addressed within the curriculum (Scottish Government, 2008a).

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<sup>1</sup> A period of curriculum review took place between 2002 and 2008 in Scotland. Following a change in administration in 2007, the Scottish Executive was renamed the Scottish Government and what had been referred to as 'A Curriculum for Excellence' became 'Curriculum for Excellence'. After the review and consultation period on the learning experiences and outcomes for each of the eight curriculum areas, CfE was published in 2009.

The study reported in this thesis provides an insight into the process of SBCD by examining how nine curriculum leaders of physical education within one local authority responded to their role as curriculum designers. In the discussion of the findings, issues of structure and agency are foregrounded, as the study enables a nuanced appreciation of the interplay between educational policy and planned educational practice in physical education. The study focused on teachers and considered key shaping features of the context as they engaged in SBCD. CfE as an instance of curriculum was not the object of enquiry but it was necessary to consider how its development and other aspects of workplace conditions provided affordances for, and presented constraints on, teachers.

Chapter 2 will outline the central features of educational change. It is important to note that CfE presented a view that a transformation of education was required to ensure that achievement and attainment were raised. Importantly for this study, the Scottish Government created a set of texts and curriculum guidance that shaped the context for curriculum development.

Schools and education authorities will continue to be accountable for the decisions they take about the curriculum they offer, with expectations that they will use arrangements creatively and flexibly and in ways which raise levels of achievement and attainment for all young people. (Scottish Executive, 2004, p. 10)

Local authorities were expected to show leadership and help schools and teachers to develop the curriculum (Scottish Government, 2008a). The intention of CfE was to provide children with a 'broad and general education' through a process of engagement within and across eight curriculum areas (Scottish Executive, 2006b). It was explicitly stated that 'literacy, numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing' are the responsibility of all teachers (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 4). In place of aims and objectives, there are four key capacities. The curriculum should enable young people to become; 'successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors' (Scottish Executive, 2006b, p. 10; Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 7). Teachers were expected to engage with the curriculum guidance provided and consider how best to use the 'experiences and outcomes' outlined in CfE to develop the four capacities (Scottish Government, 2009a).

Thus the curriculum is framed not as content, but as hierarchical 'experiences and outcomes' in each curriculum area, with *statements*, written in the first person, aiming to encapsulate the expected learning experiences and outcomes. Each statement is written to reflect the expected learning outcome and the experience through which a student might achieve it. The example below is from the physical education section of the 'Health and wellbeing' (HWB) area of CfE.

I practise, consolidate and refine my skills to improve my performance.  
I am developing and sustaining my levels of fitness. HWB 2-22a /  
HWB 3-22a (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 84)

CfE framed and presented experiences and outcomes with the intention that each school develop its curriculum within this framework. Priestley and Humes (2010) have argued that the development of CfE changes the role of the local authority, schools and teachers. In Scotland teachers at all levels in the education system had to consider how to: introduce the curriculum; develop the curriculum; plan courses within their school. Curriculum enactment is shaped, enabled, constrained and patterned by the pre-existing contextual and material arrangements in schools (Coburn, 2001; Honan, 2004). Ultimately, developing the curriculum taught in each school is the task of teachers. They are required to be, as Honan (2004) describes, bricoleurs. There is a complex and nuanced interplay between the structures of schools and the agency of teachers. Honan's (2004) findings indicate that the process of curriculum design needs to take into account how teachers respond to, and interpret, curriculum texts.

This thesis investigated how teachers of physical education responded to the challenge of developing the curriculum. It explored issues of curriculum change, and specifically the way in which physical education teachers in one local authority in Scotland viewed the impact of CfE. These changes in Scotland are not unique. Physical education is an area of the school

curriculum which has been subject to significant political intervention over the last twenty years (Fernández-Balboa, 1997; Barrie Houlihan, 2002; Johns, 2003; Leow, 2011; Penney & Evans, 1999). School curricula have become areas of intense political interest and one noticeable feature is a focus on health promotion within schools. Concerns about health and wellbeing have led to policies designed to improve and enhance health. It is well documented that changes in policy have effects but research findings, including this study's findings, provide evidence that effects are not always aligned with policy intentions.

In Chapter 2 the review of literature will surface some of the issues that arise when there is an assumption that changes in curriculum will lead to changes in teachers' practice. Research in this vein seeks to detect the extent to which curriculum change at policy level causes changes in practice.

Interpretive studies typically hold that understanding curriculum change can only be achieved by analysing teachers' actions and the meanings that they ascribe to the curriculum they develop. The overarching theme of the review of literature is the interplay between agency and structure. Through the twelve sections of this chapter, issues which pattern, shape, constrain and enable agency in curriculum development are explored.

The review initially addresses broad themes in educational change, exploring the issues of top-down policy making in matters of curriculum. The next two sections of the review consider: teachers' role in curriculum development and superficial change. These sections of the review examine the competing perspectives of teachers as barriers to change and teachers as agents of change. Research repeatedly highlights that waves of reform and policy intended to transform schooling, typically result in only superficial change in the curriculum planned in schools. An important finding from previous research is that concerns with standards have led to a focus on attainment and the development of mechanisms to hold educators to account for the investment made in education. The focus then shifts to consider the research on teacher professionalism and the next two sections highlight an emerging perspective that teachers are central to curriculum development.

As the introduction of CfE provided the context for curriculum development, section 2.7 considers some of the key features of its central documents and research pertaining to the role of the teacher in SBCD. Sections 2.8 through to 2.10 draw on national and international research to enable an exploration of salient points related to the educational context, curriculum development, the curriculum model underpinning CfE and selected features of the curriculum guidance teachers were expected to follow.

The final three sections focus on contemporary research in physical education, considering pertinent innovations which highlight teachers' agency in curriculum development. The penultimate section before the summary, examines closely the emergence of 'Health and wellbeing' and research findings which provide a perspective on the 'possibilities and pitfalls' for physical education when health becomes a focus for the subject (O'Sullivan, 2004, p. 392). Although recent studies of curriculum change have presented important insights, the review highlights that concerns over curriculum fidelity have rather overshadowed the role of the teacher. Alert to these issues, the researcher considered that insufficient attention has been given to contextual factors in the process of curriculum development. Drawing on contemporary scholarship informed by critical realism, this study outlines in Chapter 3 the research processes which were employed to present an alternative view.

Chapter 3 sets out the questions which underpin the study and provides a detailed account of its research design. Critical realism provided a way of seeing the potential for educators to engage in curriculum development as well as keeping in view 'the existence of independent structures that constrain and enable these actors to pursue certain actions in a particular setting' (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p. 787). To provide an insight into SBCD within one local authority in Scotland, the research design focused on teachers and considered contextual factors.



The research adopted an inclusive flexible research design, drawing mainly on the methodologies of a qualitative interpretive approach but also including quantitative contextual data (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002; Scott, 2010). Repeated semi-structured interviews with nine teachers and the lead person for physical education within the local authority were the central sources of data. The chapter gives a quite detailed account of the teachers who were interviewed and the characteristics of the schools. The interview transcripts and documents obtained from the local authority provided rich data that gave an insight into physical education teachers' experiences of the curriculum design process. In the analysis of data the researcher considered the policy texts and curriculum documents produced by the Scottish Government and other agencies such as Learning and Teaching Scotland and HMIE which had been designed to guide the process of SBCE. The chapter outlines, and gives a rationale for, the approach taken to analysis setting out how it was fit for purpose; and gives a detailed account of the different stages of analysis. In addition, it sets out how validity was conceptualised, and the practical steps taken to provide a trustworthy account.

Data analysis generated findings that addressed the research questions. Chapter 4 addresses the first research question and centres on the contextual aspects of curriculum enactment. In chapter 4, three themes; accountability; attainment, and support for curriculum development are

presented. The chapter reveals the complex interplay between the policy context, curriculum leaders' awareness of accountability and attainment and support they were able to draw on.

Two distinct but related processes emerged from the analysis of the study's data. Chapter 5 details the actions curriculum leaders undertook as they sought to learn about CfE and interpret what it involved. This process is referred to in the study as first order SBCD. Chapter 6 focuses on what they planned to develop in their school, what is termed as second order SBCD.

Chapter 5 presents the key elements of the teachers' engagement with curriculum guidance and related professional learning activities. It provides a nuanced account of how curriculum leaders interpreted national and local curriculum guidance. This chapter provides an important insight into how the process of first order SBCD led to a reinforcement of these participants' existing approaches and a reinterpretation of what they would be required to develop as they introduced CfE in their school. It presents compelling evidence that rather than being passive recipients of policy, these teachers had been active participants. The chapter gives a detailed picture of how in the first year of CfE the teachers considered, in ways that were both pragmatic and innovative, how to develop the physical education curriculum. It thus challenges the perception that curricula are 'implemented'.

Five central themes, drawn from the preceding findings chapters are discussed in Chapter 7, against the background of extant literature. This chapter provides the researcher's interpretation of the interplay between teachers' demonstration of agency and the contextual factors that shaped SBCD. What this study contributes to the literature is an insight into first and second order SBCD revealing that teachers exercised their capacity for professional judgement as they developed the curriculum. The teachers were alert to the regimes of accountability but what they developed was not wholly patterned or shaped by these concerns.

The discussion considers the question of why these teachers did not follow the overt steer in the new curriculum for physical education to focus on children and young people's 'health and well-being'. It considers why they chose an alternative course of action, focusing on what they considered to be 'new' elements of CfE, rather than seeking to transform physical education into 'health and well-being'.

Chapter 7 concludes by providing a conceptual overview of the processes of SBCD revealed by this study. This conceptual overview is encapsulated in a figure, 7-3 that enables the researcher: to offer an explanatory account of the interplay between all of the elements considered in the findings chapters: and to summarise the discussion. The study provides a nuanced appreciation of

physical education teachers' thoughts and actions through its fine-grained description of the processes of SBCD.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter a range of literature has been included, firstly on the basis of its contribution to the area of research in which the study is located.

Literature has been selected to allow a consideration of broad themes in the field of curriculum, SBCD and the role of the teacher. Secondly, particular studies which have relevance to Scottish education are included to assist in critiquing the development of CfE. Thirdly, previous studies in physical education which inform the discussion of the findings have been selected for inclusion. The overarching aim has been to appraise previous contributions, considering the insights they offer, whilst being alert to potential limitations.

The review begins by considering the broad issues of educational change.

This is followed by an exploration of the role of the teacher in curriculum development. The related issues of policies that seek to harness teacher professionalism and the implications for curriculum development are then drawn into focus. Although teachers are the core focus of the study, the introduction of CfE and specific features of curriculum guidance require consideration. The findings and debates raised by recent research illuminate both the educational context teachers in this study were working within and

the curriculum guidance provided by the Scottish Government. The final sections focus more specifically on physical education, enduring themes in studies focused on physical education teachers' role in curriculum development and the (re)emergence of health concerns shaping the curriculum.

## **2.2 Educational change**

Raymond (1991) captures in the quotation presented below the range of purposes that may inform educational change, the varying scope of its ambitions and the contrasting ways in which it can be perceived.

Change is usually associated with development, progression, renewal, reform and innovation and, as such can be considered to be with us all the time. It may be intentional systematic or a form of unintentional drift. It can involve a whole school or just a small part, a department or an individual. It can be major or minor, voluntary or imposed, originate internally or externally, be threatening or non-threatening, it might even be exciting. (Raymond, 1991, p. 36)

Educational change is often presented as necessary and positive in policy texts. Another strong theme is that teachers consider change to be problematic. One issue explored in this study is that innovation and change can be small-scale and represent a considerable achievement on the part of teachers.

Curriculum design seeks to address two interrelated questions, 'what should be learned?' and 'how should it be learned?' Both may at first sight appear to be practical considerations, however designing the curriculum involves complex decision making and a series of political judgements. Curriculum design decisions reflect choices, and interests and confer status. The curriculum is not fixed but reflects the outcomes of wider debates about how to use public money. Given the focus of this study on teachers, it is important to review how educational change has placed limits on teachers' autonomy in matters of curriculum development, and the extent to which contemporary educational policy making may, or may not, provide affordances for teachers to engage in processes related to the development and enactment of curriculum (Day, 2002).

Ward and Doutis (1999) identify three themes of educational change from their review of literature. Firstly, curriculum reforms vary in nature and ideology, with the literature identifying two broad approaches, externally mandated changes imposed on schools and teachers, or school-based teacher-initiated approaches. Secondly, professional development can be viewed as the mechanism of reform. Teachers are always in Fullan's (1993b) opinion 'change agents' and must become the agents of change. Finally, workplace conditions appear to have a significant impact on the potential of reform, these include but are not limited to: the organisation of the school



day, class sizes, the staff to pupil ratio, school leadership and teacher workload.

Contemporary research into curriculum construction and change reveals one recurring feature, which is that new developments always have to contend with what has gone before. Despite policymakers' intentions to start with a blank page, the histories of the curriculum, the structures of education and, importantly for this study, the teachers are influential. A broad conception of curriculum informs this study. Curriculum is acknowledged as socially constructed, and in relation to the first theme, school curricula is an area of increasing political interest. As Kelly (2009) indicates, debates about education are seldom conducted without the consideration of wider global concerns. A prominent theme in contemporary curriculum research is that concerns over material resources have led to developed nations valuing human capital and seeking to orientate curriculum reform to ensure that citizens are prepared for life-long learning (Young, 1998). In the era of the 'global knowledge economy' where economic sustainability and viability relies on innovation and development, these concerns have had an impact on how nation states view educational provision (Wheelahan, 2010; Hargreaves, 2003). School curricula are now constructed to consider the global as well as the local. In a changing world education has to prepare students for an uncertain world and with each cycle of political thinking about curriculum what takes place in schools is also expected to change.

Curriculum construction and the processes by which curriculum change operate in school contexts to meet the perceived needs of a changing world are ongoing. Critical scholarship highlights the often problematic balance between opportunities and constraints for the school curriculum (Goodson, 1992; Moore, 2004; Young, 1998). There are enduring debates about quality, educational standards and attainment in examinations; and governments around the world have sought to bring about reforms to address these and other concerns. Skilbeck's (2005) analysis suggests that curriculum development, which was often considered to be an activity located in schools prior to the 1980's, shifted to become increasingly, if not exclusively, the preserve of national governments. There is a considerable body of scholarship which documents the emergence of centrally created and mandated curricula (Apple, 2011; Kress, 2000; Ladwig, 2009; Petrina, 2004; Skilbeck, 2005). Centralised control has led to the creation of national frameworks, which were considered the best, and in some cases the only, way 'to effect desirable changes in the curriculum' despite the paucity of empirical evidence to support such developments (Skilbeck, 2005, p. 131). Kelly (2009) suggests that curriculum construction in recent times has tended to focus on the products of education, stressing what is referred to by Short (1986) as the measured curriculum, or, often referred to in the literature, as an instrumental view of education (May, 2008; Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin, 2011; Moore, 2004).

An instrumental view of education and educational change has often been associated with the desire of government to bring about a desired course of action in schools. A central feature of a 'top-down' approach is a limited role for teachers in the development of the curriculum. Analysis of top-down approaches point to the prescription of educational objectives, curriculum content, teaching materials and assessment approaches which are all designed to achieve predetermined outcomes (Apple, 2011; Kelly, 2009; Sabatier, 1986). In 'top-down' curriculum design teachers do not develop the curriculum.

It has been suggested that top-down curriculum reform sought to create a 'teacher-proof' package of materials to be received by teachers who would then be expected to implement policy in practice (Apple, 1990; Macdonald, 2003; Priestley, 2010b). Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) have claimed that despite efforts to tightly prescribe what takes place in schools, innovations at the level of policy have not resulted in changes in practice. In part they point to a flawed conception of cause, represented by the creation of education policy, and effect, assessed on the degree to which practice reflects policy.

It would appear that over time governments and policymakers have begun to move away from creating 'teacher-proof' policy and curriculum. Adams (2011) indicated that an alternative approach has been to consider how best to employ terminology that will find traction in effecting educational change, that recognises teachers' role in the development of curriculum. To a certain extent educational reforms have sought to improve teacher engagement in the process of change. This is exemplified in the emergence of 'school improvement', 'school effectiveness', 'pedagogical change', 'teacher learning', 'professional learning' and 'curriculum innovation' (Buchanan, 2015; Toom, Pyhältö, & Rust, 2015). All of these terms and concepts bind together the need for change with the need for action on the part of teachers; but changing the curriculum through the creation of new policies or curriculum designs masks the complex interplay between structures and teacher agency. 'School improvement' and the other terms listed above seek to develop a 'positive' discourse about educational change. Previous research findings suggest that teachers can be sceptical and resistant to change, because change is also associated with loss (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; Ha, Wong, Sum, & Chan, 2008; Spillane et al., 2002). Teachers report that reform results in a loss of control, loss of autonomy and a loss of connection to what they were familiar with as the curriculum moves in an alternative direction. Most frequently, change represents a burden for teachers and brings with it additional work. Fullan (1998, p. 6) reported that being presented with successive 'top-down' initiatives designed to reform the

curriculum led teachers to view their role as a 'miracle worker who can do more with less'.

### **2.3 Teachers and educational change**

Fullan (2007) has explored the complex nature of educational change and how change is to be achieved. He stressed the uncertain nature of the change process and that policy makers often present confusing messages for teachers. One such message is that what they are already doing needs to change, so change is required and in many cases imposed by governments who tightly control all stages of the policy process and use regimes of accountability as a mechanism to influence indirectly what takes place in the context of practice.

There are other instances where change is top-down but consultation with teachers takes place before the framework is presented for 'implementation'. Rather than tightly prescribing the content of the curriculum, teachers are required to discover how best to use the resources available to them and exercise their professional judgement. In this instance, change is required, but the question of how to change practice to meet the predetermined and specified outcomes appears to be less tightly controlled. However, as this study will explore in more depth, the history of previous reforms and the legacy of accountability have an impact on how teachers engage in the

process of curriculum development and the extent to which they can act on their professional judgement requires an appreciation of the wider context in which they work.

Turning now to the second broad theme of professional development, this section will focus on two main areas. A review of the role of teachers in educational change reveals a paradox, on the one hand education needs to change, because how the curriculum is currently being 'delivered' by teachers will not enable all children to achieve their potential. Accordingly, teachers should focus on the 'new' directions outlined in policies decided by those outside the classroom to achieve new aims to improve education. In short, teachers require professional development. On the other hand, teachers are the key to reform, they are 'agents of change' and will be able to 'implement' the necessary changes to bring about desirable educational outcomes (Fullan, 1993b; McKernan, 2008; Skilbeck, 2005). In this alternative perspective it is teachers' professionalism and ability to engage in professional development that enables them to engage in the process of change.

Previous studies of curriculum change and educational reform have considered the efforts and perspectives of teachers and schools as they work to 'implement' educational policy (Sabatier, 1986). Researchers have sought

to determine if policy has had an impact on teachers and schools (Eisner, 2005). An 'implementation' view of policy is reflected in studies that have sought to ascertain the extent to which there is fidelity between policy and practice. An emerging body of international literature presents an alternative view, arguing that a greater understanding of the nature of teachers' role in the policy process is required. There is a growing appreciation that in the context of schooling teachers do more than read policy and then work to 'implement' the policy in a school (Chan, 2012; Coburn, 2001; Priestley, 2010b; van den Berg, 2002; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). Earlier studies have provided an insight into the ability of teachers to respond to policy in different ways suggesting that curriculum enactment is a more appropriate term to employ when considering how teachers work with, and respond to, policy. Teachers, schools and local authorities mediate policy and there is interaction between multiple levels of the education system when curriculum change takes place (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012; Braun, Maguire, & Ball, 2010; Day & Smethem, 2009; Scott, 2000; van Driel, Bulte, & Verloop, 2008). This broader concept of curriculum enactment, which recognises teacher's agency and their capacity for professional judgement, has informed this study; and, as will be revealed, teachers can and do respond to policy in ways that studies narrowly focused on the fidelity between policy and practice may have failed to acknowledge.

In summary, a significant body of literature on educational change appears to present and reinforce a perspective that teachers are a barrier to innovation, teachers resist change. Even when studies are critical of the values embodied in the curriculum there remains an overt or implicit criticism of teachers who have been judged not to have aligned their practice with the expectations of policymakers. There are studies which highlight the active role that teachers can and do take when responding to curriculum change, however research repeatedly suggests that although teachers seek to bring about change, there is little in the way of change and innovation. At this point it is important to offer a critique of studies which present this view, a critique which will reappear in this chapter (section 2.12 p. 53) when considering physical education and in the final discussion.

## **2.4 Superficial change**

‘Teaching is a complex and difficult activity’ (Evans & Davies, 1988, p. 9). Teachers are often not able to see where their efforts will lead. The big picture of change is obscured by the micro-level interactions required to enact change. In any period of curriculum change teachers continue to work within the security of what they know about their day-to-day routines established over time and within this context consider how to respond to the process of change (Eisner, 2005). The critique of educational change is that superficial changes take place but changes which address the structures of education and in many cases the material conditions of schools are more



difficult to bring about (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1996; Evans & Davies, 1988; Kress, 2000; Olson, 2002). There is a considerable body of literature documenting the different ways in which teachers' actions or inaction result in the intentions of policymakers not leading to the curriculum innovation desired (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007; Gordon & Patterson, 2008; Ha et al., 2008; Kirk, 1990; May, 2008; McLaughlin, 1990; McLaughlin, 2011; Pope & O'Sullivan, 1998; Popkewitz, 2010). It has been suggested that nothing short of radical transformation is required to reform education so that rather than reproducing inequalities it fulfils the emancipatory promise for all within society (Jones & Moore, 1993; Moore, 2004; Piveteau, 1974; Young, 1998).

Many of the critiques of teachers' perceived failure to provide educationally worthwhile experiences are located in a conception of educational change as a 'top- down' process, where improvements could be achieved if teachers were willing and able to read the policy and then take the required action (Sabatier, 1986; Scott, 2000). Fullan's (1999), Cuban's (1995) and Young's (1998) accounts suggest that conceptions of top-down approaches to curriculum change are problematic as they either underplay the role of the teacher, or create unrealistic expectations of teachers to change the curriculum without associated changes in educational structures. The discussion chapter will return to this issue, drawing on Archer's work (2011, 2013a) that provides an alternative conception of change. The next section will focus on how concerns with educational attainment have led to the

development of a performative culture in schooling (Ball, 2003; Beckett, 2012; Maguire, Perryman, Ball, & Braun, 2011).

## **2.5 Attainment and Accountability**

The 'top down' imposition of policy requires the teacher and the site where schooling takes place to change. Insights from research around the world point to waves of reform in education focused on changing schools (Maguire & Ball, 1994; McLaughlin, 1990; Mundy, 2007; Sahlberg, 2006). What emerges from these accounts can be very broadly summarised as follows: curriculum is too important for teachers to be trusted with its development; as teachers are not engaged in the process of curriculum development, teachers resist change; and reforms at policy level are not reflected in practice (Kelly, 2009; McKernan, 2008; Popkewitz, 2010; Priestley, 2010a). As the central feature of curriculum reform is that change is required to raise standards, then mechanisms that can assist in bringing about the necessary changes 'have' to be developed and deployed in education. Regimes of accountability associated with managerial approaches have emerged in educational discourse and are often traced back to concerns nation states have had in relation to status, competitiveness and a desire to see standards rise in schools (Storey, 2007; Winstanley, 2012). Progression through hierarchical curriculum levels and attainment in examinations serve as important measurable proxies for improved standards.

Previous research has indicated that focusing narrowly on attainment restricts the curriculum and teachers alter their practice to ensure that students are prepared for examinations (Beckett, 2012; Hutchinson & Hayward, 2005; James & Gipps, 1998). This is a form of indirectly shaping the actions of teachers. The other well-documented regime of accountability to control and direct teachers' efforts is the inspection system. The underlying rationale is that through inspection and a focus on educational attainment teachers' actions will be directed towards what governments and policy makers consider to be of value (Ball, 2003, 2004; Lingard & Sellar, 2013). The result of 'top down' policy and regimes of attainment and accountability is that the role of the teacher is marginalised and manipulated. Observing teachers, collecting data about examination results and other forms of data capture have been and remain part of centralised strategies to improve educational outcomes (Reeves, 2008; Snyder, 2007). Schools are inspected by external agencies and their assessments are made public. In preparation for inspection schools and teachers are often required to engage in self-evaluation and set targets to improve the education provided. Researchers have highlighted that the quest to improve 'standards' in schools has often included the development and control of centralised systems of quality assurance.

Whilst seeking to improve the quality of education is uncontested, the strategies employed to account for and measure quality remain subject to debate. Most importantly, research highlights that although accountability procedures were designed to serve as a positive force in the development of schooling, teachers can and do report that they are concerned with attainment and inspection (Reeves, 2008; Troman, 2008). These concerns permeate schools' approach to curriculum design and teaching and learning, and are captured in the statement that 'what gets measured gets done' (Wilson, Croxson, & Atkinson, 2006, p. 168). The worry is that regimes of attainment and accountability associated with improving the quality of education restrict teachers' freedom to think about what they do as curricula are shaped by anxieties related to achievement in assessment, thereby determining the knowledge that is considered important and leading to learning activities that are most likely to enable learners to pass assessments (Snyder, 2007). Researchers repeatedly question the effectiveness of regimes of accountability and inspection in improving the quality of education, pointing to the evidence that teachers, rather than feeling supported, report that they feel under surveillance and accountable for the improvement of education without the flexibility or resources to achieve the quality of provision expected (Ball, 2004; Down, 2012; Lingard & Sellar, 2013; Troman, 2008).

Alexander (2000) and Ball (1994) suggest that it is somewhat inevitable that teachers feel they are not trusted or have lost control over the content of the curriculum, given the centralised nature of reform and change. Nutt and Clarke (2002) suggest that many teachers, aware of the issues facing them in their work, feel overwhelmed by the intense pace of change in schools, causing them to question their role within the profession. Research does not suggest that teachers are opposed to improved standards. There is little debate that improved educational outcomes are desirable. The issue for teachers is that they consider there to be a lack of clarity about their role in achieving these improvements (Beckett, 2012; Day, 2002; Doherty & McMahon, 2007). Research findings indicate that when reform takes place at such a rapid pace teachers frequently seek guidance in planning (Anning, 1994; Fung & Chow, 2002; Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, Lamaster, & O'Sullivan, 2004). When policy and curriculum are externally determined teachers have come to expect support in the form of pre-packed or prepared curriculum materials (Saha & Dworkin, 2009).

There are alternative, and to a certain extent competing, views on the professionalism of teachers in seeking external support to enact the curriculum. There is a strong discourse that curriculum reform has led to a de-professionalization of teachers (Agarao-Fernandez & Guzman, 2007; Bottery & Wright, 1996; Freidson, 1984). While policy makers create the curriculum teachers have reported in studies that they 'deliver the curriculum'

(Bolam et al., 2005, p. 127). MacPhail (2007) suggested that by seeking external support to teach externally designed examination courses teachers had become complicit in their own de-professionalization. An alternative perspective is that teachers have a pedagogical repertoire that allows them to be adaptable but, as repertoires develop over time, teachers are presented with the challenge of being able to adapt in response to external as well as internal change forces (Fullan, 2003). Accordingly, when the pace of change outstrips opportunities for professional development, teachers will sensibly seek to learn from and use resources that protect their time – in many instances time is the *only* resource available to support curriculum development (Eisner, 2005). Teachers are also concerned that when curriculum change is imposed, the responsibility for the success lies with them as they are held to account for the performance of students. When the examination system is used as a proxy for educational effectiveness this accounts for teachers' energies being focused on attainment (Elovainio et al., 2015; O'Connor & Alfrey, 2015; Swann & Brown, 1997).

## **2.6 Teacher engagement in curriculum development**

Kennedy (2007), Day et al. (2007) and Stoll (2007) suggest there is a new era emerging in educational policy; and they detect that teachers are being given a more prominent role in curriculum reform and leadership. Kelly's (2009) stance on curriculum innovation builds on the work of Stenhouse (1975) and emphasises the central role of teachers in curricular innovation.

He suggests that teachers can engage in curriculum development and that in many instances teachers already do create the curriculum in schools.

Chan's (2012) recent work reflects a move towards a more sophisticated view of policy, suggesting that in many parts of the developed and developing world nation states and policy makers have moved beyond creating policies for implementation (Braun et al., 2010; Grimaldi, 2012; Lingard & Sellar, 2013). Codd's (1988, p. 244) earlier contribution highlighted that policy texts are often not 'blueprints for political action' but are 'ideological texts that have been constructed within a particular historical and political context' (Codd, 1988, p. 244). In summary, previous research draws into focus the multivalent nature of policy and curriculum texts. They serve more than one purpose, and there can be intended and unintended consequences when policy moves into practice.

Precisely how policy moves from the context of production into the context of practice is complex (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1993). There are varied accounts of how teachers engage with policy texts. Scott (2000) suggests teachers' practices in schools do not bring about the change expected by policy makers because teachers do not know what policies they are expected to be working towards. He points to evidence that teachers report relying on second hand accounts mediated through other formats and do not engage

first hand with policy texts and/or curriculum guidance. Teachers either report not having time to engage in professional reading, or as reported in both Cohen and Spillane's (1992) and Coburn's (2001) studies, consider policy irrelevant to practice.

Down (2012) observes that when policy presents a view that teaching is a practical matter teachers are written out of the text. Teachers are not expected to engage with the text in a way that requires consideration of the 'philosophical, ethical, contextual and political dimensions of teaching' (Down, 2012, p. 64). A dominant view in the literature is that policy texts have power, and that power to change or influence what takes place in practice may depend on how texts are presented and the extent to which teachers are considered to be active or passive in the policy process.

In the context of this study it is important to focus on the work of Ball (1994) and Hall (2001) to develop an appreciation of how policy texts are presented. In their analysis of education policy, influenced by concepts of active and passive engagement with text, they have drawn on Roland Barthes' concept of 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts. A 'writerly' text requires active engagement on the part of the reader. Readers are invited to make their own interpretation of the text. A 'readerly' text presents a more closed fixed meaning for the reader. Although this study does not focus on CfE as an object of enquiry



(see Bryce & Humes, 2013) it is important to consider specific aspects of the guidance provided to teachers in their role in curriculum development as these texts do appear to have been created with the intention of being 'writerly'. The forward of the curriculum review which lay the foundation for CfE contained this statement:

These documents provide a starting point for a continuous cycle of reflection, review and improvement which will actively involve young people, teachers and educators, parents, employers and the wider community. This is just the first stage. We are embarking together on a challenging process which will have a profound influence on our children's futures. (Scottish Executive, 2004a, p. 5)

There was a series of statements in the documents supporting the development of CfE that sought to harness the professionalism of teachers. Below is perhaps the most explicit statement which provides a strong source of evidence that teachers had a significant role to play in the development of the curriculum.

Our approach to change is different. It aims to engage teachers in thinking from first principles about their educational aims and values and their classroom practice. The process is based upon evidence of how change can be brought about successfully – through a climate in which reflective practitioners share and develop ideas. (Scottish Executive, 2006b, p. 4)

These statements provide an indication that in the development of CfE teachers were asked to engage actively with the process of curriculum review and development. As the next section of the review considers, this 'writerly'

approach to the curriculum is less well evidenced in the literature on educational change.

## **2.7 Teachers' role in curriculum development**

An implementation view of curriculum policy would support Barthes' (1977) concept of 'readerly' texts. Apple (1990) referred to policy makers' attempts to 'teacher-proof' the curriculum. He and others have presented an analysis of curriculum policy and texts, designed to present information to be read by teachers without the need for interpretation in relation to aims or content (Kelly, 2009; Kirk, 1990). The role of the teacher is to 'implement' the curriculum. The teacher 'delivers' curriculum content and seeks to do this in a way that ensures fidelity between the aims of the policy and their practice. Studies that seek to explore the extent to which there is fidelity between the curriculum as stated in policy texts and the practice of teachers, privilege the role of the policy maker, reduce the role of the teacher, and seek to find fault where practice does not reflect policy (James, Griffin, & Dodds, 2008; Kimpston, 1985; Zhu, Ennis, & Chen, 2011). In short the teacher's role is to 'deliver' the curriculum and make practice fit policy. When practice does not 'deliver' the expected curriculum content, then teachers are viewed to be less accomplished, perhaps even incapable of teaching educationally worthwhile experiences. There are alternative perspectives, when one shifts the focus from the teacher to issues of curriculum design, the teacher's role in the change process can be viewed differently.

A curriculum embodies and seeks to reproduce not only knowledge but values (Carr, 2003; Petrina, 2004). Consequently, there is perhaps a legitimate role for teachers working in a democratic society to resist 'implementing' policy (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995; Kelly, 2009; McKernan, 2008; Young, 2014). There is a strong argument that top-down conceptions of curriculum reform and associated concepts of 'implementation' have wrongly positioned teachers as delivery mechanisms for curriculum content (Giles, 2006). Therefore rather than viewing teachers as a barrier to reform, Apple (2011) and others have repeatedly raised questions about the curriculum drawing attention to 'what knowledge' has been privileged and for 'what purpose' were reforms being undertaken (Moore, 2004; Scott, 2010; Young, 2014). Even in the period where the sociology of knowledge informed much of the critique of educational policy and curriculum reform and design, research studies continued to imply that in the case of policies judged to be worthwhile teachers were required to act to translate them into practice (Giles, 2006; Kelly, 2009).

Analysis of policy and curriculum guidance has highlighted that not all texts are fully formed and provide a blueprint for action for teachers. There has been a transition from 'top-down' approaches where the textual representations of policy or curriculum tightly specify the course of action for teachers. Adams (2011) suggested that as scholarship shifted to consider

how teachers engaged with policies, a new perspective was brought to bear on documents and how they were created. In top-down approaches it was clear that teachers did not own the curriculum. It was authored by others for teachers, and positioned teachers outside the process of curriculum making. In top-down approaches a key characteristic identified by Ball (1994) has been the creation of a 'readerly' policy text. The purpose of the text is to provide a guide for action and the teacher's role is to take the necessary action to 'deliver' the curriculum which will lead to worthwhile educational experiences. Macdonald's (2003) analysis is that curriculum design and policymaking has witnessed a shift, altering the role of the teacher, with the intention to build partnerships with teachers. Building partnerships with teachers is a feature of 'soft policy', representing a change from 'top-down' approaches, but the enduring feature is that policy and curriculum guidance remains the preserve of others writing for teachers (Adams, 2011; Chan, 2012; Dinan-Thompson, 2003).

The work of both Codd (1988) and Hall (2001) helps to develop an appreciation of how policymakers seek to draw teachers into partnership. They have considered the extent to which policymakers have intentionally sought to engage teachers in the process of co-creating curriculum. For a policy text or curriculum guidance to be considered 'writerly' it requires the active engagement of the teacher in considering how to interpret the principles of curriculum in practice. In this process teachers' professional

judgement is necessary to develop an appreciation of the curriculum and to consider how to bring the curriculum into being in the context they are working in. As indicated earlier, CfE contained statements which sought to engage teachers in the process of curriculum development. In the section that follows recent research exploring CfE and the context of its development is reviewed, with a focus on the role that teachers are expected to take in the development of this particular curriculum.

## **2.8 Curriculum for Excellence and teacher professionalism**

MacLean et al.'s (2015) recent research findings indicated that the construction of the CfE documents represented a more 'writerly' approach to educational policy and curriculum development. The Scottish Government created CfE with the stated intention that it provided a curriculum framework within which the 32 local authorities were required to support the teachers working in schools to engage in a form of school based curriculum development (SBCD) (Scottish Government, 2008a). MacLean et al (2015) and Priestley (2010b) have emphasised that teachers were encouraged to engage with curriculum guidance and associated texts to bring CfE to life in each school.

Kennedy's (2007) research provides an insight into the underlying structures and conditions for teachers' professional action in Scotland. Teachers'

conditions of service has employed the term 'professional' in a way that could be considered to offer a less restrictive interpretation of the expected action required from teachers (Bottery & Wright, 1996; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001). The McCrone Agreement<sup>2</sup> (SEED, 2001), in Kennedy's (2007) analysis, has had a powerful influence on the concept of professionalisation for teachers in Scotland. Each teacher is required to undertake 35 hours of professional development per year, in recognition that if teachers are to maintain, develop and enhance their professionalism they need to have protected time to do so. The McCrone Agreement (SEED, 2001) is significant in contemporary Scottish education as it appears to have laid an important foundation stone on which to build the concept of professional autonomy. Priestley's (2013) analysis of CfE suggested that policy texts repeatedly made reference to teachers as professionals. This would seem to imply that the Scottish Government was affording teachers a degree of control and autonomy when determining the content of the curriculum.

The 'Building the Curriculum' documents published and distributed to every school in Scotland, clearly stated that teachers were required to engage in a period of reflection about educational practice (Scottish Executive, 2006a; Scottish Government, 2008a). 'Building the Curriculum 3' indicated that

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<sup>2</sup> The McCrone Agreement (A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century: Agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report) outlines the agreement reached in 2001 regarding teachers' pay and conditions in Scotland. The agreement followed an independent committee of inquiry which reviewed teachers' pay and conditions, chaired by Professor Gavin McCrone.

teachers and school staff would need to work to create a curriculum that addressed CfE's curriculum framework (Scottish Government, 2008a). Teachers are therefore not considered to be a delivery mechanism for curriculum. Archer's (1998) concept of 'agential mediation' would appear to offer a perspective on this process of curriculum development, as teachers work within and through the structures of Scottish education. Contemporary analysis of the teacher's role in education is moving beyond a narrow conception of delivery. For example Priestley et al's (2012) findings clearly articulate that teachers do more than deliver education, practice is complex and planning what will take place in schools is part of this complex process (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011; McKernan, 2008; Olsen & Sexton, 2008; Olson, 2002).

## **2.9 Teachers as curriculum developers**

Issues of autonomy and professional freedom permeate the literature of educational change, for example, Bottery (1998) wished to see teachers freed from centrally determined prescriptive curricula. Munn et al., (2004) appear to present an argument that in Scotland the consultation with teachers, through the national debate on education, encouraged teachers' engagement and provided an opportunity to shape the curriculum developed in Scotland. Teachers have been trusted to use their professional judgement to develop locally determined curricula to meet the needs of their pupils. In contrast to 'top-down' approaches, teachers have an increased role in the

development of the curriculum in their school, which previous research findings have suggested could be a professionally enriching experience (Boote, 2006; Cothran, 2001; Day et al., 2007; Gordon & Patterson, 2008; Ha et al., 2008). The approach adopted appears to embrace what Storey (2007) termed 'new professionalism' where teachers and schools appear to be given more freedom and autonomy.

The curriculum guidance documents for CfE were written with the intention of engaging teachers and schools in professional reflection, 'Building the Curriculum 1' contains this statement '[developing a new curriculum] challenges us to think differently about the curriculum and it permits professionals to plan and act in new ways' (Scottish Executive, 2006, p1) <sup>3</sup>. Teachers and schools appear to be 'trusted' – valued - and their professional expertise, knowledge and ability to plan and act in new ways is central to the development of CfE in each school (Priestley, 2013).

Within a clear framework of national expectations, teachers will have greater scope and space for professional decisions about what and

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<sup>3</sup> The Scottish Government originally published CfE in a green ring binder (over 300 pages). It is no longer possible to get a print copy as all materials are published on the Scottish Government's website or Education Scotland webpages. It is important to highlight that the information about, and curriculum guidance for CfE is considerable; there are over 47,000 webpages within the Education Scotland domain [ <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/> ]. In 2011 a teacher searching within the Scottish Government/Education Scotland domains for information using 'Curriculum for Excellence' as a search term would have returned over 18,000 results. The Education Scotland website now hosts all of the information originally provided in the ring binder as well as additional guidance, files, videos and information. The intention is that this body of information provides a resource for parents, students, teachers and schools which can be updated and amended more cost effectively than print materials.



how they should teach, enabling them to plan creatively within broader parameters (Scottish Executive, 2006, p.1).

Kennedy (2007) highlighted that a very significant and visible feature of educational discourse in Scotland is that teachers are professionals, well acquainted with the material conditions of the schools in which they teach. The Scottish Government's vision for teachers to work together to develop the curriculum was set out in '*Building the Curriculum 3: a framework for learning and teaching*' published in 2008. This document reinforced that teachers' professional actions were central to securing 'better educational outcomes for all young people' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 4).

Although teachers had professional discretion over what and how they should teach, at the time of the study, schools in Scotland were subject to inspection and review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE)<sup>4</sup>. Prior to inspection schools have to submit a self-evaluation document. HMIE and the Scottish Government determine the questions against which schools evaluate their educational provision. This document '*How good is our School?*' is the key mechanism through which schools and teachers are held

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4 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) was an executive agency of the Scottish Government, responsible for the inspection of public and independent, primary and secondary schools, as well as further education colleges, community learning, Local Authority Education Departments and teacher education. HMIE and Learning and Teaching Scotland were merged in 2011 to create Education Scotland.

to account (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a). The two statements below, taken from the HMIE (2008a) self-evaluation document provide a very telling insight into the way that teachers' professionalism is bolstered and then demanded on the same page of the self-evaluation framework. Soft policy is steered with strong words, demanding great deeds.

In education, we have a highly skilled workforce that is engaged directly in delivery or as part of the support infrastructure. Their key focus is on adding value in ways that deliver maximum impact for learners.

Curriculum leadership demands individuals and team members to collaborate and engage in purposeful conversations in order to make their contributions to coherent curriculum design. Developing the curriculum is everybody's job. (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2008a, p. 4)

As noted earlier, CfE is a national curriculum framework, however each local authority and the schools within the authority can work to devise a curriculum that addresses the policy imperatives of the Scottish Government (2009).

Priestley (2010) observed that the intention of policy makers has been to capture the best features of curriculum planning, strong leadership and accountability measures with practitioners' local knowledge harnessed to enable SBCD. CfE required teachers working in schools to engage in SBCD. There appears to be a return to the ideas presented by Skilbeck (2005) and Stenhouse (1975) who advocated a school-based approach to curriculum development. The process model advanced by Stenhouse (1975) struggled

to find a foothold and there has been a phase of more centralised methods of reforming schools. Priestley and Humes (2010, p. 355) indicated that although CfE sought to engage schools in curriculum development 'changes to teaching will be rendered difficult in many schools and that the maintenance of the status quo will be a likely outcome in many cases.'

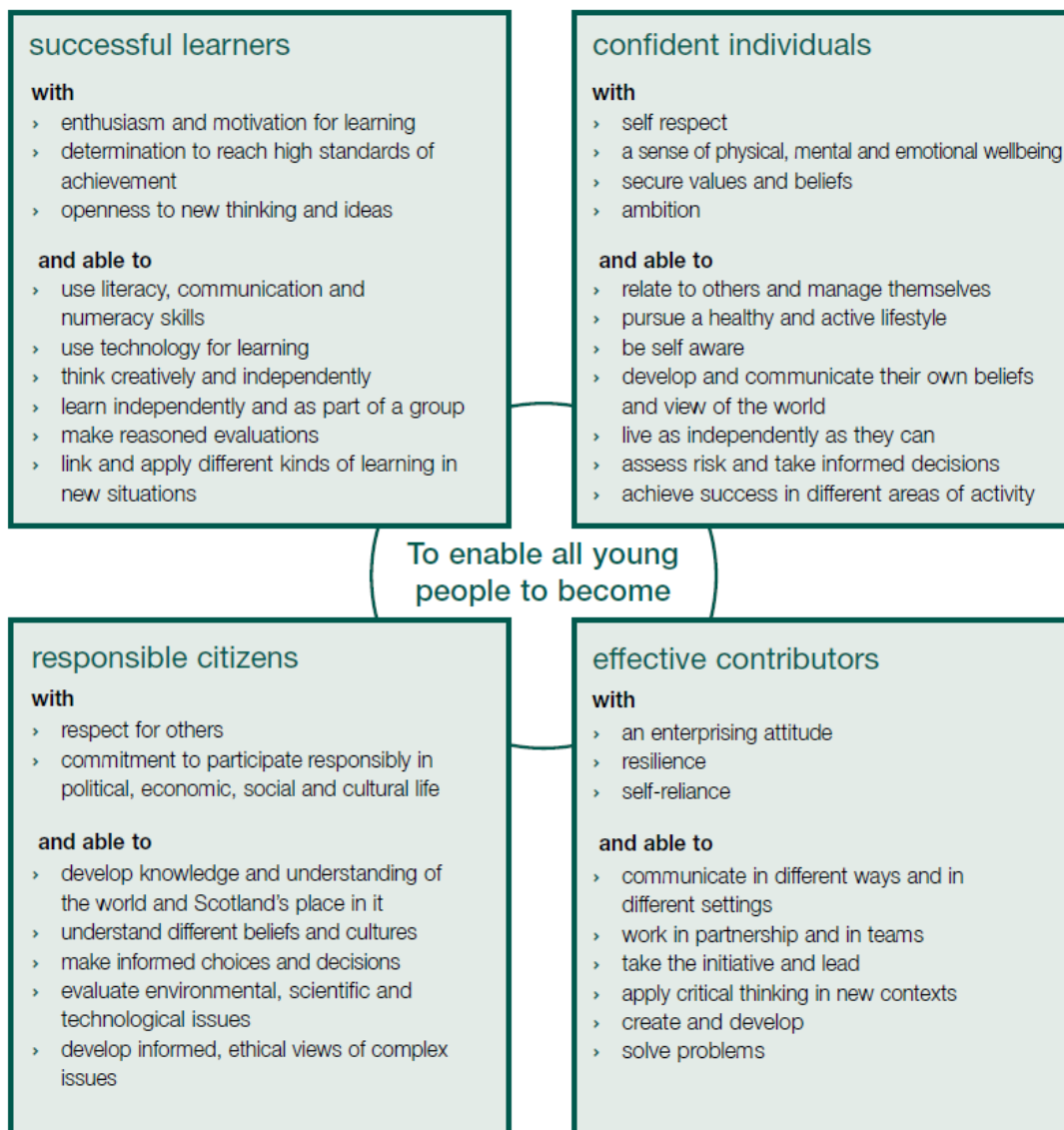
It is necessary to consider the guidance schools and teachers were provided as they engaged with SBCD. The findings chapters and the discussion will focus more specifically on how teachers in the study interpreted the guidance. The next section of the review considers the content of CfE documents and literature related to SBCD.

## **2.10 School based curriculum development**

CfE was introduced with the intention of building on perceived strengths of the Scottish education system whilst taking account of global influences and addressing some of the health, social and economic challenges facing Scotland (Drew, 2013). For the first time the values, purposes and principles underpinning the curriculum in Scotland were articulated (Bryce & Humes, 2008). However, the opportunity for the teaching profession to influence and engage in debate in relation to the underpinning values, purposes and principles was restricted as all of the entities involved in the development of CfE endorsed them when they were proposed by the curriculum review group

(Priestley & Humes, 2010; Scottish Executive, 2004a). Carr et al. (2006) indicated that it was difficult to dispute the values of wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity as anything other than positive qualities to develop through engagement in formal education.

CfE was framed around purposes, which came to be known as the 'Four Capacities' (see Figure 1-1). These are aspirational statements, reflecting the intention that the curriculum developed in each school would enable 'all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and at work' (Scottish Executive, 2004a, p. 12). All educators in every educational setting have the responsibility to develop the Four Capacities. Each capacity was broken down into a set of attributes that provided the starting point for SBCD.



**Figure 2-1 The Four Capacities**

The publication of *A Curriculum for Excellence: Progress and Proposals* emphasised that it was the responsibility of all educators in every educational setting to develop the Four Capacities (Scottish Executive, 2006b). In addition to the Four Capacities, Priestley and Humes (2010) noted that educators were to consider how to develop 'skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work' (Scottish Executive, 2006b, p. 4).

The policy documents and curriculum guidance contained variations in the degree of prescription and flexibility educators were provided. Contemporary research concerned with the development of CfE has identified a shift from the earlier broad focus on values, purposes and principles in 'A Curriculum for Excellence' and 'Progress and Proposals' to more directive statements in 'Building the Curriculum 3' (Baumfield, Hulme, Livingston, & Menter, 2010; Priestley & Minty, 2013; Scottish Executive, 2004a, 2006b; Scottish Government, 2008a; The Educational Institute of Scotland, 2009). The following statement to guide teachers is an example; 'planning should demonstrate the principles for curriculum design: challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; personalisation and choice; coherence; relevance' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 5). Firstly, there is little scope for educators to consider that there may be other principles for curriculum design, these *are* the principles; and secondly, they *should* be evident in the curriculum developed in each school. Given the lack of preceding attention to this topic, this study provides an important contribution to the literature as it offers an insight into how physical education teachers engaged with curriculum guidance.

While these principles for curriculum design may appear at first sight to be novel, there are in fact similarities with the principles stated in the preceding

5-14<sup>5</sup> curriculum. As Gordon and Patterson (2008) highlighted curriculum development has a history and maps onto existing practices. There is never a blank slate. Adams (2011) suggested that one approach policy makers employ is to brand new developments. New policy requires new terminology to mark the departure from what has gone before. There are four 'new' principles; *Challenge and enjoyment; Progression; Depth; Personalisation and choice*. The findings chapters and the discussion provide an insight into how these and other aspects of CfE that were perceived to be 'new' had an impact on teachers making sense of the curriculum and how they planned to enact CfE.

*Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 3, a framework for learning and teaching* provided more detail to assist the education profession imagine how the curriculum might be enacted (Scottish Government, 2008a). It is worth noting that the definition of 'curriculum' appears in the document on four separate occasions: 'the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 11). When the definition appears for the final time in the conclusion it is followed by this statement: 'Curriculum

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<sup>5</sup> The previous curriculum guidance in Scotland was referred to as 'The 5-14 Development Programme' as Harlen (1996) notes it is commonly referred to as simply the 5-14. For the purposes of clarity in this study the intended purpose of the documents that were published as part of the function of 'The 5-14 Development Programme' will be referred to as the '5-14 curriculum guidelines'. The final document of the programme was published in 1993, after the earlier publication of guidelines for English language and for mathematics.

planners at all levels will need to ensure that they view the curriculum in this wider sense and that the curriculum works to deliver the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 46). The repeated definition of 'curriculum' coupled with the explicit guidance that the learner was to be placed at the centre sought to reinforce the cross-cutting themes presented in 'Progress and Proposals' (Scottish Executive, 2006b).

The Scottish Government considered educators as part of the public services and sought to align the values, purposes and principles for CfE with the five overarching strategic objectives to make Scotland a smarter, safer and stronger, wealthier and fairer, greener and healthier place (Scottish Government, 2008a). Secondary schools were to focus on experiences beyond subject disciplines to provide a 'Broad General Education'. There was an emphasis on 'literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing' as well as other cross-cutting themes, such as: enterprise, citizenship, sustainable development, creativity. Interdisciplinary learning was advocated and the curriculum developed in each school was to set out what learners should be able to do and the experiences that would contribute to their learning.

Kelly's (2009) work on curriculum models is instructive in providing a framework for developing curricula.



- Education as transmission and curriculum as content.
- Education as instrumental and curriculum as product.
- Education as development and curriculum as process.

In summary, Kelly's (2009) view is that conceptual clarity and coherence in curriculum planning require the acknowledgement of the model underpinning curriculum development. The categories; 'content' (knowledge); 'product' (outcomes); 'process' (experience) are not mutually exclusive. For example, Kelly (2009) outlines the primary focus of a process model would be on experiences, because the underpinning rationale is that holistic development is the purpose of education. This is not to say that content or outcomes are absent from educators minds in the planning or pedagogical process, but they should not overshadow or 'divert' the curriculum away from the primary focus on development through experience.

Stenhouse (1975), Skilbeck (2005) and McKernan (2008) called for schools and teachers to engage in SBCD without predetermined outcomes, content or pedagogical approaches, because they favoured a process model of curriculum. As the preceding discussion of CfE policy and curriculum guidance documents has outlined, what initially appeared to be a process model, became more of a product model as 'experiences and outcomes' were specified (Scottish Government, 2009a). Priestley and Humes (2010) provided a rather scathing critique of the development of CfE:

... it is our contention that the decision of policymakers to retain a feature of 5–14, namely outcomes organised into sequential levels, has resulted in a curriculum which is incoherent structurally and which contains epistemological and pragmatic contradictions. This means that CfE is inherently not a process curriculum, but rather a mastery curriculum, an expression of vaguely defined content articulated as objectives. (Priestley & Humes, 2010, p. 355)

Their analysis of the curriculum guidance suggested educators would face a significant challenge in making sense of the curriculum, because what had initially appeared to have been an opportunity for SBCD from first principles became restricted as additional guidance was provided.

## **2.11 Experiences and Outcomes**

To develop an appreciation of why the opportunities for SBCD were more restrictive than those outlined by Stenhouse (1975), Skilbeck (2005) and McKernan (2008), and were heavily criticised by Priestley and Humes (2010) it is important to focus on the ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ contained in ‘Curriculum for Excellence’, published in April 2009 (Scottish Government, 2009a). This document included predetermined learning ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ and teachers were expected to use the principles of curriculum design selected by the Scottish Government to inform the curriculum developed in each school. There is a growing body of research critiquing the development of the ‘Experiences and Outcomes’ which also explores their impact on Scottish Education (Boyd, 2008; Bryce & Humes, 2008, 2013;

Priestley, 2013; Reid, 2008). Addressing all of the 'Experiences and Outcomes' contained in CfE or focusing in detail on the statements is beyond the scope of the study as these are not the objects of enquiry. For the purposes of this study it is important to outline some of the features of the text pertaining to the guidance on assessment and the statements of 'Experiences and Outcomes'.

### **2.11.1 National expectations – five levels**

The statements of the experiences and outcomes describe national expectations of learning and progression from age 3 to 15 (also referred to as 3 to S3). Each experience and outcome is set out as a line of development and they were intended to describe progress in learning at five levels (Early, First, Second, Third and Fourth). In the context of this study the participants were likely to be planning on the basis of the Second, Third and Fourth levels. Second level should be attained by the end of Primary school (P7); Third and Fourth are thought to span the first three years of Secondary school (S1-S3). Reinforcing the notion of national levels, CfE stated that 'Fourth level broadly equates to SCQF level 4' (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 4). SCQF is the 'Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework' which contains 12 levels and previously only 'certificated' courses were assigned a level and credits (Bryce & Humes, 2008). The most familiar 'high stakes' assessment, 'Highers' are benchmarked at SCQF level 6 and serve as entrance qualifications for tertiary education (Bryce, 2013).

### **2.11.2 The structure of Curriculum for Excellence**

There are three areas of CfE, 'health and wellbeing', 'literacy' and 'numeracy' which are considered to be the 'responsibility of all' teachers and eight curriculum areas. It is important to note the sheer number of 'Experiences and Outcomes'. Within the document, including those that are the 'responsibility of all' and the eight curriculum areas, at Second, Third and Fourth levels there are 1405 experiences and outcomes.

The table below (see Table 2-1) shows within each area identified as a 'responsibility of all' there were elements, and for each element there were lines of development (which are more commonly referred to as strands by teachers). Across all five levels for all strands which are the responsibility for all practitioners there are 311 lines of development.

Written in the first person for each strand were statements for each of the five levels to cover ages 3-15. These combine learning experiences with outcomes. Each learning experience and outcome had a unique code which identified the curriculum area and the level. As an illustration of a statement, the strand of 'Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing' included: 'I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them. HWB 0-01a/ HWB 1-01a/ HWB 2-01a/ HWB 3-01a/ HWB 4-01a' (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 14).

**Table 2-1 Responsibility of all practitioners**

Curriculum for Excellence: Experiences and Outcomes
<b>Responsibility of all practitioners</b>
<p><b>Health and wellbeing across learning</b></p> <p>Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing</p> <p>Planning for choices and changes</p> <p>Physical activity and sport</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p><b>Literacy across learning</b></p> <p>Listening and talking</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Writing</p> <p><b>Numeracy across learning</b></p> <p>Number, money and measure</p> <p>Information handling</p>

In CfE, there are eight curriculum areas, within each are subjects, within each subject there are elements and 'strands'. Significantly for teachers of physical education CfE provides curriculum guidance for the 3-18 age range under the overarching theme of health and wellbeing, as opposed to the preceding 5-14 curriculum guidelines where it was placed within the 'Expressive Arts' area of

the curriculum. However, Dance has remained a subject within 'Expressive Arts'. Participants in the current study noted that this placement of Dance provided an opportunity for teachers of physical education to work in an interdisciplinary way. An example of one experience and outcome for physical education is shown in the table below. The code HWB 2-22a denotes that the experience and outcome is part of the 'strand' for 'Health and wellbeing'. The 2- or 3- indicates which level the experience and outcome could be assessed at and 22 denotes that this experience and outcome is the 22<sup>nd</sup> strand for this curriculum area (Scottish Government, 2009a).

**Table 2-2 The eight curriculum areas within Curriculum for Excellence**

Curriculum areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Expressive arts</li> <li>❖ Health and wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌘ Physical Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Movement skills, competences and concepts</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>≈ [An illustrative statement from this strand within HWB: I practise, consolidate and refine my skills to improve my performance. I am developing and sustaining my levels of fitness. HWB 2-22a/ HWB 3-22a]</li> <li>❖ Languages</li> <li>❖ Mathematics</li> <li>❖ Religious and moral education</li> <li>❖ Sciences</li> <li>❖ Social studies</li> <li>❖ Technologies</li> </ul>
<p>Scottish Government (2009)</p> <p>Key: ❖ Curriculum area; ⌘ Subject; ◆ Element; ≈ Strand.</p>

Overall for the subject of Physical Education there are three elements:

‘movements skills, competencies and concepts’; ‘cooperation and competition’; ‘evaluating and appreciating’ (Scottish Government, 2009a, p.

84). Within these elements there are 25 experiences and outcomes, with the likelihood of teachers considering how to plan for 17 of these in the secondary school context. This study considers how teachers engaged with the demands of interpreting, and responding to, this large body of national guidance. The next section of the review focuses on important insights previous research in physical education have offered in relation to curriculum change.

## **2.12 Physical education**

Curriculum change and curriculum development in physical education are well established areas of enquiry (Brewer, 2003; Green, 2001; Houlihan & Green, 2006; Houlihan, 2000; Jewett, 1989; MacPhail, 2004; Metzler, 2011; Penney & Evans, 1999). Ward and Doutis's (1999) review of the motives for reform and key issues that characterise reform in education and physical education, is instructive. In relation to the first theme identified by Ward and Doutis (1999) the National Curriculum in England and Wales is an example of 'top down' attempts to reform teachers' practice. Curtner-Smith's (1999, p.75) conclusion was that the 'more things change' in physical education policy 'the more they stay the same' in practice. This very same point was made by Sarason (1971) twenty years earlier when describing teachers' failure to bring about reform in schools in the USA. Curtner-Smith's (1999) research findings cast doubts on teachers' ability to change what they taught and how they taught lessons. In his assessment of the research data,



teachers were not able to translate changes in educational policy and curriculum into practice. A consistent theme in the literature is that there is a lack of fidelity between curricular aims and curriculum practice in physical education (Haerens, Kirk, Cardon, & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2011; James et al., 2008; Williams, 1996; Zhu et al., 2011).

An analysis of research findings does enable a more nuanced view of curriculum development. In the context of physical education there has been a tendency to set out to research whether the curriculum outlined and prescribed for teachers to implement is translated into practice (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Kirk, 1990; Thorburn, 2007; Ward, 1999; Zhu et al., 2011). The result is that researchers discover that teachers have not faithfully implemented the curriculum which tends to bolster a deficit model of viewing teachers and physical education. Based on the premise that desired policy or subject outcomes cannot be sufficiently evidenced, the findings of these studies often lead to calls for more radical reform of the curriculum or for teachers to engage in professional learning activities (Attard & Armour, 2006; Kirk, 2010).

The absence of, and apparent resistance to, reform is occurring at a time when there is critical scholarship in physical education based on the evidence of learners' experiences and a perceived failure to achieve the

stated aims for the subject. This has led to advocates concluding a radical reshaping/reforming of the curriculum is required (Bailey et al., 2009; Capel & Whitehead, 2013; Penney & Chandler, 2000; Ward & Doutis, 1999). Kirk (2010) has suggested that if physical education is to remain a school subject in the long term then nothing less than radical reform is required.

This is not a recent concern. There has been a consistent call for a radical revision of physical education over a twenty year period (Ennis, 2006; Griffin, 1986; Kirk, 2010; Locke, 1992; Placek, 1983). Kirk's (2010) analysis of physical education presents a view that there has been little in the way of innovation or change since the 1950's when the teaching of sport techniques replaced the earlier focus on educational gymnastics and movement approaches. Perhaps one reason why change has been difficult to enact relates to the second issue identified by Ward and Doutis (1999). Teacher's experiences, dispositions, skills and occupational socialisation mediate against change and reform.

Previous research in the field of physical education has considered issues of teacher socialisation and teacher identity with the intention of exploring and understanding professional action. Research has also focused on the impact that biographies have through a life history approach and studies involving physical education teachers' careers and philosophies (Armour & Jones,

1998; Dowling Naess, 1996, 2001; Stroot et al., 1994). Armour and Jones (1998) indicated that sport and education were sites where the body was rendered docile. This view of the physical education teacher coupled with Green's (2002) conceptual analysis forms a picture of an acceptance of a sport and physical activity focus for the curriculum. Perhaps this explains in part why studies repeatedly report that teachers were reluctant and resistant to plan the physical education curriculum differently and/or adopt changes in their pedagogical approach. A strong sporting ideology is their guide for action and decision making when it comes to curriculum planning.

Evans and Penney (1992) present a convincing argument that what is also required is research that contributes to understanding how and why certain phenomena occur in the context of reforming physical education. Studies have considered the possibility of pedagogical models within physical education, with research exploring Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU), Sport Education and Health Based Physical Education (Gray, Sproule, & Wang, 2008; Haerens et al., 2011; Kirk, 2004; Webb, Pearson, & Forrest, 2006). However, as previously stated, the literature highlights that there is a paradox; innovation and changes in curriculum take place without corresponding changes in professional practice.

### **2.13 Innovation in physical education**

Bechtel and Sullivan (2007) and Cothran, (2001) provide evidence that innovation and change is possible in physical education. Analysing the conclusions of these papers points to the efficacy of research designs which consider both agential action and structural conditions. It is the interplay between these that accounts for innovation and change. Cothran's (2001) research appears to indicate that when the teachers considered the learning experiences of their students they wanted to reform the curriculum and were able to negotiate changes within the educational systems they worked in. Bechtel and Sullivan (2007) classified external policies as inhibitors to teacher change, citing limited professional development opportunities for teachers as one element and educational priorities as another. The reason why educational priorities inhibited change was because educational priorities privileged curriculum areas and subjects perceived to have higher educational worth.

In the discourse of educational attainment narrowly focused on academic achievement and the acquisition of propositional knowledge, physical education more closely associated with procedural knowledge was considered of lesser importance (Green, 2001; Reid, 1997). Physical education as a subject on the periphery of the curriculum made the teacher's efforts to change more problematic as these were not seen to be valued or worthwhile (Hendry, 1975; Raymond, 1991; Sparkes, Templin, & Schempp,

1990; Zhu et al., 2011). However, what appeared to have a positive impact on change were teachers' personal visions for physical education and the support that they were able to draw on from colleagues (Cothran, 2001; Kulinna et al., 2012).

CfE represents a very recent and wide-ranging review of educational provision in Scotland and its impact on teachers of physical education is as yet relatively unknown (Brewer, 2013; Gray, MacLean, & Mulholland, 2012; MacLean et al., 2015). The researcher is unaware of published research which has specifically focused on the curriculum development experiences of Scottish secondary physical education teachers (MacLean et al., 2015). Therefore this study represents the first published account of physical education teachers' experiences of developing the physical education curriculum since the introduction of CfE. Understanding how teachers engage in the process of school based curriculum development is important because, through inspection regimes, it is teachers who are held accountable for the success or failure of any new initiative (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a, 2008b). Moreover as research indicates, teachers do not simply roll out policy, they mediate policy, through their own knowledge, values and beliefs about teaching and curriculum. Contained within the initial proposals for 'a CfE' and retained and enshrined in the publication of the 'CfE' are changes in the vision for education and the role of teachers in curriculum development (Scottish Executive, 2004a, 2006b; Scottish Government,

2009a). These changes have potentially far-reaching implications for physical education as a school subject and the physical education teachers tasked with developing the curriculum (McEvilly, Verheul, Atencio, & Jess, 2014; Penney, Jess, & Thorburn, 2006; Thorburn & Horrell, 2014; Thorburn, Jess, & Atencio, 2009, 2011).

### **2.13.1 Health and wellbeing**

If teachers are tasked with developing a curriculum where physical education is part of HWB then it does seem that the conception of HWB may well have an influence on the form that physical education takes. It may also be the case that how the teachers view physical education as a school subject will change, remain or alter depending on what perspective is taken on HWB. It is relatively easy to state that 'health and wellbeing' are important, therefore worthy of promotion and development (Scottish Executive, 2006b). It is rather more difficult to define 'health and wellbeing' and create curricula that would create meaningful learning experiences for children and young people (Quennerstedt, 2008; Thorburn & Horrell, 2014).

There has been a tendency for researchers and policy makers to focus on approaches which seek to promote health and wellbeing by adopting a biomedical model (Evans, Rich, & Davies, 2004; Johns, 2005; Leow, 2011; Shingo & Takeo, 2002). The danger of a narrow conception of health has

been clearly stated by O'Sullivan (2004, p. 396) as she detects a 'shift from a discourse on promoting activity and health to a discourse concerned mostly with disease, weight, and obesity'. A chief concern is that a long held belief that physical education and health are already well aligned will lead to the development of programmes that privilege fitness and seek to ensure that health is 'performed' in lessons. In New Zealand, Burrows, Wright and Jungersen-Smith (2002) raised the prospect of well documented concerns about obesity leading to unquestioned acceptance of health as an individual responsibility. There are anxieties that the development of curricula in other parts of the world focusing on health and wellbeing has led, or will lead, to practices designed with the intention that children and young people will be provided with 'ready-made lifestyles and a menu of healthy behaviours' from which to choose (Quennerstedt, Burrows, & Maivorsdotter, 2010, p. 98). As yet there is only limited research about these issues in the context of Scotland, and to date none of the research focuses on the sense-making process that curriculum leaders have engaged with as they developed the curriculum (Gray et al., 2012; Johnson, Gray, & Horrell, 2013; MacLean et al., 2015).

In the era of the 5-14 curriculum, guidance on 'Health Education' was initially contained within 'Environmental Studies'. It was only later that a separate revised set of guidelines was published (Learning and Teaching Scotland/Scottish Executive, 2000). In the context of this study, as the

findings chapters will explore in more detail, this earlier guidance did not consider 'health' to be a subject to be taught, therefore teachers of physical education were not expected to 'deliver' health lessons as they are in other nations (Hardman & Marshall, 2000; Penney, 2013; Wattchow & Connor, 2003).

The emphasis was on a whole school permeation approach, and given that international research has highlighted the association of physical education with health, it is important to note that there was no specific mention of a role for the subject in teaching health. There were however, attainment targets which are similar to the 'Levels' in CfE and a strand titled 'physical health' which set out that all pupils should be 'able to show knowledge and understanding of what they do to keep healthy' (Learning and Teaching Scotland/Scottish Executive, 2000, p. 16). It is perhaps not surprising that after the introduction of CfE physical educators and children, as Johnson et al's (2013) study revealed, were aware of health discourses associated with the subject and considered they knew how to keep healthy.

Kirk and Colquhoun's (1989) important study on the impact of a curriculum package designed to support 'daily physical education' revealed that teachers planning and practices varied, but the discourse of healthism (exercise=fitness=health) characterised their approach to physical education.



Cale, Harris, & Chen (2014) have suggested that when physical education is orientated towards health promotion, as it has been around the world, then rather than enhancing health, teachers' concerns with attainment and accountability have led to narrow conceptions of health. Their research findings question the practices taking place in physical education where teachers with limited knowledge of health engaged in monitoring and testing pupils. It is their concern that if these practices became widespread then they would be counterproductive and unlikely to promote or enhance health. A striking conclusion of their study and Quennerstedt's (2008) work, (which adds to long standing concerns over the way health is addressed in schools and physical education), is that teachers' interpretations of health and wellbeing may lead to the creation of curricula and the adoption of practices that are not educational at best and at worst unsafe.

## **2.14 Summary**

In seeking to develop an appreciation of the literature on educational change it is important to consider the importance of curriculum theory.

Curriculum as content and education as transmission, curriculum as product and education as instrumental and curriculum as process and education as development. (Kelly, 2009, p. 56).

Kelly (2009) provides a perspective which suggests that there is a clear distinction between each of these three conceptions. Elsewhere scholars

have critiqued the nature and purpose of education in general and of physical education in particular.

Research indicates that teachers are the most important factor influencing the quality of learning (Hargreaves, 2003; Lingard, Hayes, & Mills, 2003; OECD, 2005). Research about curriculum change often elides the complexity of the interaction between policy and teachers' interpretation of policy. As Ball (1994) identifies, researchers have in the past failed to consider how teachers can be supported, seek support and support themselves in the process of change (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007; Chen, 2005; Hahnstadt, 2006; Li, 2006).

In Scotland the development of CfE and the emergence of a new curriculum area of 'Health and wellbeing' reflects the political shaping of school curricula (Horrell, Sproule, & Gray, 2012). It does not overtly appear to be tied to a desire to reform the school curriculum via a coercive standards based agenda. The guidance that two hours of physical education take place each week is a limited target when compared to previous attempts to reform other parts of the curriculum.

Priestley's thesis adopted a critical realist perspective analysing the process of curriculum change in three Scottish schools as they responded to the challenge of teaching integrated social subjects (Priestley, 2007). To date there is no published research which specifically considers issues of curriculum change in physical education within a critical realist framework. Therefore this study seeks to break new ground in research concerned with physical education, by drawing on critical realism as an underpinning theoretical framework. As a meta-theory embracing epistemological and ontological elements critical realism does not commit a researcher to the view that absolute knowledge of the social world is possible, but it does underpin the use of empirical research methods to provide explanatory accounts of the stratified nature of reality. The next chapter provides more detail about how the study drew on critical realism.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The research design process and how it was influenced by the researcher's stance in relation to ontology and epistemology is detailed in this chapter.

The chapter begins with a statement of research aims and research questions and provides a rationale for these. This is followed by an account of the methodological considerations that informed the research. An outline and justification of the research strategy is then given, setting out key features of the study's theoretical framing and showing how these features were in line with the research aims. Issues of validity are considered before describing in detail the research process undertaken during the study. In addition ethical considerations and issues related to the sampling strategy also feature in this chapter.

#### **3.2 Research aims and questions**

The study aimed to provide insight into the process of SBCD in physical education. Since contextual factors had been identified as an important consideration in the process of SBCD (Braun et al., 2011), the study had a dual agenda, firstly to understand the context for SBCD as experienced by the teachers and secondly to discover what actions they had taken or were planning to take as they engaged with the challenges of SBCD. To pursue the study's dual agenda, the research goals were delineated by developing

the following research questions.

- How did curriculum leaders of physical education engage with the national and local curriculum guidance in relation to CfE?
- What do curriculum leaders identify as factors that patterned and shaped school based curriculum development?
- What do curriculum leaders of physical education plan to enact within the CfE framework?

These research questions underpinned the study. The primary objective was to design a study where the researcher could present an account of curriculum leaders' experiences of SBCD as they enacted CfE within the physical education context (Maxwell, 2013; Silverman, 2001). There was a degree of flexibility in the research design to enable consideration of contextual influences and emerging insights (Flick, 2009).

Anderson and Scott (2012) have suggested that insufficient attention has been given to issues of context in qualitative research and the review of literature also indicated that contextual factors pertaining to curriculum development may have been overlooked in previous research studies (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007; Ha et al., 2008; Kirk, 1990; Pope & O'Sullivan, 1998). Developing the research design and methodological approaches for this study therefore needed to accommodate the consideration of contextual

factors.

This concern with delineating contextual factors needs to be seen against the efforts to reframe issues of 'causality' in qualitative research. Consistent with the stance Archer (1995, 2003) and Maxwell (2012) adopted, within this thesis there has been an intention to develop explanations of the actual events and processes that led to specific outcomes, (e.g. school based curriculum development in physical education). This notion of 'local causality' has informed the research questions in that there is a specific focus on the *process* of SBCD. The research has been designed so as to provide an account, grounded in the teachers' lived experiences, of what played a role in the development of the physical education curriculum in each school in response to CfE.

It is important to note that although the study set out to provide insights into the actions of teachers, it is acknowledged that this does not establish any law-like explanatory account of what has happened in other schools or seek to predict what would take place in other schools. It was possible to detect in the accounts provided by the teachers: their individual processes of making sense of curriculum guidance, their sense of agency and the extent to which they felt the structural and cultural conditions of schools had shaped SBCD. Within this study the intention has been to provide a carefully constructed,

fine-grained description and analysis of teachers' reported experiences of curriculum guidance, SBCD, and their decision making processes; which will help to develop a more nuanced appreciation of teachers' engagement in SBCD.

Where and when the study took place was an important consideration. In Scotland, responsibility for education is devolved to each of the 32 local authorities; therefore a decision was made on the grounds of resources and to aid the clarity of focus, to limit the study to secondary schools within the geographical area of one local authority. The deliberate decision to focus on one local authority also addressed a finding from the review of literature, namely the fact that it is not known (due to a lack of available accounts) how middle tiers of government such as a Local Authority may or may not shape the context within which teachers of physical education work (Chan, 2012; Coburn, 2001; Scott, 2000).

### **3.3 Methodological considerations**

#### **3.3.1 Theoretical framing**

Determining an appropriate theoretical framework is a key decision in any research process. At a practical level it helps to establish what can be considered within the study, ruling in and out areas of investigation. At a more theoretical level it provides concepts to both inform the study and guide

the researcher to identify possible courses of action as they decide upon appropriate methods and identify threats to credibility and validity (Maxwell, 2013; Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). Using interviews to develop an insight into teachers' experiences and actions related to SBCD as they introduced CfE may at first have appeared to be a practical activity. However, as Maxwell (2012) clearly articulated, there are issues of ontology and epistemology to be considered prior to engaging in the research process. At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that giving attention to the theoretical framing for a research approach does not carry with it a guarantee of rigor or validity (Burbules & Smith, 2005). As this chapter goes on to explore in some detail, an interpretive study requires the researcher to be reflexive in their approach. This includes a self-aware exploration of the nature of the object of enquiry and how best this can be researched to establish claims to knowledge.

Maxwell's (2013, vii) premise that all knowledge is 'theory-laden' shaped the ontological, epistemological and methodological nature of this study. Maxwell (2013, vii) outlines a critical realist framework, which combines a realist ontology

[the] (belief that objects in the world exist independently of our beliefs and constructions) with a constructivist epistemology (the belief that our knowledge of this world is inevitably our own construction, created from a specific vantage point, and that there is no possibility of our achieving a purely objective account that is independent of all particular perspectives).



As a teacher educator the researcher sought to understand the complex interplay of experiences, agency, structure and curriculum development in education. The ontological depth of critical realism drew attention to the stratification of reality, knowledge and everyday practice within curriculum change.

As a meta-theory embracing epistemological and ontological elements; critical realism does not commit a researcher to the view that absolute knowledge of the social world is possible. Critical realism underpins the use of empirical research methods to provide explanatory accounts of the stratified nature of reality. A critical realist's perspective is that there is a reality, but reality is stratified and that reality is difficult to apprehend. Knowledge of this reality is socially constructed and there is a distinction made between "the real world, actual events that are created by the real world and the empirical events which we can actually capture and record" (Easton, 2010, p. 128).

In the context of social scientific research Cruickshank (2003, p. 2) explained that critical realism 'is concerned with exploring how individual's agency is influenced by the social context'. Wynn and Williams (2012) suggested that researchers can productively draw on critical realism as an alternative between positivist and interpretivist paradigms. In their view critical realism

enables a researcher to keep in view the “subjective knowledge of social actors in a given situation as well as the existence of independent structures that constrain and enable these actors to pursue certain actions in a particular setting” (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p. 787). In this study it was relevant to draw on critical realism as it provided a way of conceptualising teacher’s agency in SBCD (Archer, 2011; Corson, 1991; Cruickshank, 2003; Scott, 2010).

Braun et al (2010) have argued that researchers need to consider the context and what is in the context when seeking to understand educational change. When considering contextual factors, researchers can productively draw on Archer’s (2011) conceptualisation of structure and agency to move beyond earlier conceptions of curriculum change. Applying her work to education, independent elements of reality exist, so there are objects in the world such as schools and curriculum documents, but our knowledge of specific structures and ‘mechanisms’ that created them and sustain them is limited and socially constructed. It follows that knowledge about schools and curriculum documents, and any resulting interpretation of them as objects of enquiry, is not the same as the objects themselves. Archer’s work (2011) offered the researcher a viewpoint on educational change and drew into focus social structures, which both constrained and enabled curriculum development, and the schools and teachers which were transformed by the introduction of CfE.

Social structures do not exist independently of teachers' actions and conceptions of these actions; teachers have agency, possess the ability to interpret the entities that make up the social structure and are able to understand the meaning behind their actions and those of others. Archer (2011) notes that we do not have 'perfect' knowledge of our actions or their consequences, a point which clearly applies to teachers and policy makers in the context of curriculum change. Bhaskar's (1989) earlier work stressed the importance of 'mechanisms' which he explained were the way that 'entities' enabled or limited what can happen within a given context. Archer (2011) extended this by suggesting that it is possible to detect what has 'generated' mechanisms and that researchers can detect when entities have had power to do certain things but not others.

In the case of education there are entities; governments, policy makers, policies, curriculum documents, local authorities, schools and teachers, which can exert power and control. These entities have internal structures, committees, boards, departments and individuals who are able to exercise power and it is possible to capture what action takes place, and develop an appreciation of the meaning created as a result of the 'generative mechanisms' (Archer, 2013). Utilising a research design which drew on critical realism enabled the researcher to treat both policy texts (i.e. CfE curriculum guidance) and the teachers' conceptions of contextual factors as

objects of enquiry. Critical realism provided a lens through which the researcher viewed the contextual factors shaping SBCD as captured in the accounts of the teachers' experiences and actions when introducing CfE.

In taking ahead an interpretive analysis of the teachers' accounts of their engagement with SBCD, the study sought to keep in view the contextual factors of SBCD, thereby providing an account of their experiences and actions whilst considering the interplay between aspects of agency, structure and culture (Archer, 2013b). There were significant challenges in providing an explanatory account which captured everything the teachers had engaged with and undertaken to introduce CfE in each school. The teachers' accounts of their experiences and actions were obtained via a repeated, focused interview strategy (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). Two additional sources of information were drawn upon which provided valuable data for analysis. These were firstly; specific curriculum guidance documents produced at local and national level (referred to by the teachers in the study) and secondly, contextual information about Terrane Local Authority<sup>6</sup> and participating schools. Both sources formed and informed the analysis of data.

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<sup>6</sup> Terrane – is the pseudonym given to the local authority. Terrane is a geological term used to describe a fragment of the earth's crust that has broken off from one tectonic plate and is 'sutured' to an adjoining plate, the fragment preserves its own distinctive geological history. In this study Terrane Local Authority has its own distinctive 'geological'/'educational' history and can also be considered to be 'sutured' to the Scottish Government.

### **3.3.2 Validity**

It is somewhat problematic to state that it is possible to provide a 'valid' or 'true' account of what the teachers' interpretations and actions were as they engaged in SBCD. Nevertheless, in this study, the concept of 'validity' is reflected in the researcher's efforts to ensure that what is presented is credible, trustworthy and authentic. Credibility, trustworthiness and authenticity permeated this study as a whole and were reflected in the final presentation of the findings. To examine the concept of validity further, it is important to focus explicitly on five areas of conceptual and practical concern.

Firstly, in a limited sense the study is valid because it has kept a close focus on its aims to obtain an insight into physical education teachers' experiences of SBCD. Secondly, the study sought to provide a solid foundation for the account provided by teachers by drawing on appropriate research methods to generate data relevant to the research questions. Thirdly, there was a threat to validity as data were transformed from the raw form of audio recordings into transcripts for analysis. However, steps were taken to ensure that what was created for analysis was a valid representation of the interactions that took place (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). Fourthly, drawing on the analysis of the study's data the researcher sought to present traceable and credible theoretical ideas about SBCD that provided a valid representation of teachers' accounts. These four aspects of validity are

internal processes and are given more detailed consideration in relation to the study later in this chapter and in following chapters. The fifth and final aspect of validity pertaining to this study lies in the extent to which it provides an original and useful insight into the phenomena of SBCD. The external validity of any claim that this study advances ‘knowledge’ of physical education teachers’ experiences of SBCD is open to evaluation and critical examination by the academic community on the basis of the information provided.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Maxwell (2013) advocates the operation of an interactive research design to enable researchers to connect elements of the research process and address research questions whilst remaining alert both to the threats to a study in terms of validity, and the opportunities to establish a study’s authenticity and credibility. Although there was an initial conception and ‘design’ for the study, it was not fixed. As the study progressed the interplay between different elements led to alterations and developments. There were different phases of the research, throughout these phases the researcher, as the pivot point, engaged in decision making to create a study that kept in view the purpose of the research and monitored the appropriateness of the research design.

The study required interaction with the teachers so they could provide a detailed account of how they had interpreted CfE, how they had responded to this curriculum development and the ensuing challenges of SBCD and specifically what had they planned for physical education. Later sections of this chapter provide more detail on the actions taken to move forward the research aims but before these are presented it is appropriate to set out the different 'phases' of the research design. It is important to note that these phases did not unfold in a wholly linear way. The research design consisted of: a development phase, a period of data gathering, data analysis, representing data and presenting data.

The researcher firstly engaged in pilot work to determine the feasibility of the study and concluded that two focused semi-structured interviews with each participant would provide data for analysis consonant with the research questions. The data gathering phase provided the primary source of data for the study in the form of two focused interviews with each of the nine curriculum leaders (Appendix 1 and 2). The audio files were transcribed and the field notes used to create researcher memos. These sources of data were analysed and then reduced to aid further analysis, before the researcher sought creative ways to present the data within the study.

### **3.5 Ethics**

There were ethical considerations at each of the following phases of the study: gaining approval for commencing research, the sampling strategy, engagement with teachers, data analysis and the representation of data in the findings. The following discussion of ethical issues is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all phases of the study, it does however illustrate that the ethical practice of research was not simply restricted to compliance with the procedures of the Universities Ethics Committee (Flick, 2009; Mason, 2002).

Before commencing the research, ethical approval was sought and granted from the relevant ethics committee at the University of Edinburgh. In the paper prepared for the ethics committee, consideration had been given to appropriate ways of obtaining informed consent for the collection and use of data emanating from the study. Permission had to be sought and obtained from the Local Authority for teachers to be interviewed during working hours. After such permission was granted from the Local Authority they acted as a 'gatekeeper' and circulated the information and requests for participation via their distribution lists for each school, and via the list they held for all curriculum leaders of physical education. In the early phases of the research, prior to individual schools and teachers consenting to participate, it would not have been possible for the researcher to make direct contact with the schools and teachers without approval from Terrane Local Authority. By



contrast it was possible to make direct contact with schools in the independent sector and this was done by sending similar information to the school email account with a request to forward to the curriculum leader for physical education.

The steps taken to obtain access and permission for the study presented some challenges when seeking to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of those taking part in the study. Participants in the study were given assurances that measures would be taken to secure the data collected, and pseudonyms would be used when the study was written up to prevent the identification of sources. All participating teachers provided informed consent and were told that they could withdraw from the study at any point. No teacher withdrew from the study and issues of confidentiality and anonymity associated with teachers' participation in the study did not appear to be contentious for them. However, during the interviews six teachers sought assurances that what they had said (which had been captured on the digital recorder) would be anonymised and not disclosed to anyone beyond those persons to whom they had given consent to access their interview data. The researcher was able to provide reassurances to this effect and when transcripts were created, care was taken to ensure all references to places or people had been anonymised to guard against the identification of individual teachers and their responses provided in interviews.

The issue of power in the relationship between the researcher and the 'participants researched' is an ethical consideration. Although each teacher consented to participating in the study, they did not initiate the research and so it represented an imposition and an intervention from an 'outsider'. It was important to build a rapport with the teachers; and after teachers had agreed to take part in the two interviews, they were provided with an information sheet, interview prompts and a précis of the researcher's biography. The rationale behind this approach was that it would help to make teachers aware of the purposes of the research and the importance of providing their view on the process of SBCD. It was also part of a strategy to avoid positioning the researcher as an 'expert' seeking to judge, assess or offer guidance on curriculum development (Skeggs, 2002).

The teachers taking part in the study had experience of external bodies such as HMIE (inspections) and were aware that in a period of educational change the curriculum was something 'political' and subject to scrutiny. From one perspective the aim of the research could have been misconstrued by the teachers as an attempt by the researcher to 'check up on what they were doing' which may well have produced an entirely different set of data (cf. Ball, 2003). However, as outlined above, from the outset all participating teachers were aware of the nature and purpose of the research. The researcher, (both in written and verbal communications), outlined that in his role as a teacher educator his key focus was not to evaluate their practice

but rather provide them with the opportunity to discuss their lived experiences of SBCD. Therefore the research was in no way covert and assurances were given that data obtained would not be used or shared with third parties. The transcripts reveal the approach to have been successful because although the researcher was not a member of the school the teachers did appear to consider him to be a member of the physical education profession.

Prior to engaging in field work the researcher spent time practising responsive interview approaches; and after designing and creating the interview prompts for both interviews, pilot interviews took place. Reviewing field notes taken during these interviews, listening to the audio and creating transcripts all helped to sensitise the researcher to the possible pitfalls of asking and responding to teachers' questions in particular ways. In the final iterations of the interview guides and interview prompts the researcher endeavoured to develop an approach where the teachers' voices were valued and where they could respond in a way that reflected their thoughts and their experiences. Nevertheless, there remained the possibility that teachers could engage in the study in such a way that rather than providing their thoughts and experiences, they could seek to assist the researcher by providing responses they considered to be helpful to the interviewer, or wilfully seek to engage in deception. In a similar way the researcher had to be reflexive and alert to his influence and approach throughout the study. In

the following sections of this chapter the steps taken to select a sample, conduct interviews and analyse data are outlined.

### **3.6 Sampling strategy and sample**

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, all of the physical education departments in the state and independent sector in the geographical area of Terrane were invited to participate in the study. Initial contact was made via email, (given that responses were somewhat slow to come in a follow up email was sent to see if this elicited more responses), and then a purposive sample was selected from the schools that responded. The sample was selected based on a series of conscious decisions. As this study was concerned with a fine grained analysis of SBCD a decision was taken to limit the number of schools/teachers participating to enable the level of data analysis to be sufficiently detailed. Involving a large number of schools may have captured a more complete account of what was taking place across the Local Authority, but it would not have been practically feasible to extend the study to all of the schools in the event that all had consented to participate. Data about schools were available from the Scottish Government and this informed the sampling so that schools with different catchment areas, facilities and staffing structures were selected (see tables 3-2 and 3-3).

The primary concern was to identify a sample so that the research questions

could be addressed. In the selection of the sample the intention was purposively to identify schools so that the teachers' experiences of different contextual factors related to SBCD were given due consideration. Therefore the research design did not seek to select a representative sample of teachers working within Terrane Local Authority. Eight of the schools were comprehensive taking in pupils from their designated catchment area, and one school was in the independent sector. The participating schools were located in rural and urban areas. Schools in each of these contexts often have different physical spaces and previous research has identified the facilities available for physical education are an important consideration in curriculum planning (Cothran, 2001; Hardman & Marshall, 2000; Kirk, 2010). Within the sample were some new build schools. Other schools had been refurbished and some were scheduled for development.

The table below provides a selected overview of summary data collated from statistical reports compiled by the Scottish Government.

**Table 3-1 Summary data for Scottish Secondary Schools**

Average number of pupils	Teachers (n=)	Physical education teachers	Pupils registered for free school meals (%)
809.16	22,571	1,725	12.1

At the time of the study, there were 372 secondary schools with 301,007 pupils on roll and 22,571 teachers in Scotland. Six schools in Terrane Local Authority were initially selected from those willing to participate, five from the state sector and one co-educational independent school. The total roll of these schools was 7657 which represented 34% percent of the pupils attending schools within the geographical area of this Local Authority<sup>7</sup>.

The Local Authority is referred to as Terrane Local Authority and all of the schools and the participating teachers were given pseudonyms. Each school was referred to by a geological gemstone, metaphorically drawing on a parallel between SBCD and the process of crystallisation: in SBCD, as for crystallisation, advances in understanding have identified the requirements needed for the process to occur, yet in neither case is the process simple or straightforward. This study sought to discover how in each school the physical education curriculum had been formed, and in the process of SBCD had created 'gems' with structural properties to be 'discovered' in specific contexts.

There was no intention to convey any hierarchy or indicate that one school was more precious than another, the assignment of gems was arbitrary and

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<sup>7</sup> The total roll of all of the schools within the local authority was 22,025 in 2009. After this date the Scottish Government did not collect data from schools in the independent sector.

proved a fitting and productive metaphor to reflect the developing appreciation for the schools which, in the course of the study, proved to be 'gems' to be examined and studied. It was not to suggest that schools were incapable of change or that the conditions in which they were formed determined what would take place; far from it, just as gems can be cut, polished and dazzle, the forthcoming findings chapters reveal insights into SBCD that have perhaps been overlooked. Previous studies have sought to consider curriculum development as a form of alchemy, where policy is akin to a 'magical process' with a quest to turn the base metal of a school or its pupils into gold (Armstrong, 1998; Popkewitz, 2010). From the outset, this study sought to understand each teachers' experiences and actions, rather than to adopt a position that they, the curriculum and the school would have to be transformed in order to have value.

The sampling strategy focused initially on the schools, considering those where the headteacher and curriculum leader for physical education had consented to be included in the study. A consideration when sampling related to the different conditions for the teachers working in each school. It was not possible to obtain details of school budgets or other information related to fiscal data, however as the table below indicates, across the sample there were some striking variations in the numbers of pupils in each school and the staffing resource. There were variations in staffing which could have had a bearing on the capacity of staff to engage in SCBD.

Additionally, the inclusion of data pertaining to free school meals provided a comparison (albeit crude and rather inadequate) of each school's population (Hobbs & Vignoles, 2010), and gave an indication that there were some similarities and differences within the sample.

**Table 3-2 Number of pupils and teachers in each school**

School	Number of pupils	Teachers (FTE)	PE teachers (n=)	Free school meals
<i>Zircon</i>	784	62.7	4	3.7%
<i>Ruby</i>	400	43.6	3	41.3%
<i>Spinel</i>	458	44	4	26.6%
<i>Sapphire</i>	1111	80.8	4	8.5%
<i>Opal</i>	901	76.4	6	21.1%
<i>Jade</i>	650	55.3	4	21.5%
<i>Emerald</i>	730	55	4	19.1%
<i>Topaz</i>	1250	92.8	6	6.5%
<i>Quartz</i> <sup>8</sup>	1364	456	12	Data not available
<i>Total/(Average)</i>	7648(849.77)	966.6 (107.4)	47 (5.2)	

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<sup>8</sup> Data for Quartz school is from 2009 Scottish Government school census the last year data was collected data from independent schools.



Whereas the initial focus had been on the six sample schools, as the research progressed, the sample expanded to nine schools. The researcher was also able to secure an interview with Susan. At the time of the study Susan held the post of Quality Improvement Officer for HWB and was able to provide an important insight in her interview about how support had been provided for SBCD within Terrane Local Authority.

**Table 3-3 Information about the schools and teachers sampled**

<b>School Pseudonym</b>	<b>Teacher Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years Teaching</b>	<b>Schools post NQT</b>
Zircon	Dawne	Female	54	33	4
Ruby	James	Male	29	8	3
Spinel	Sarah	Female	38	16	2
Sapphire	Katie	Female	39	17	4
Opal	Barry	Male	37	15	1
Jade	Emma	Female	29	8	2
Emerald	Oliver	Male	36	14	1
Topaz	John	Male	34	13	4
Quartz	Gary	Male	54	33	1
Terrane Local Authority	Susan	Female	40	6 years teaching in schools and 6 years in Local Authority	3

The intention was not to seek a representative sample but to capture and enable consideration of issues that could inform the account of what had potentially enabled, constrained, or patterned teachers' experience of SBCD. Table 3-3 contains information about the schools and teachers sampled. Although the initial focus was on sampling schools, similarities and differences in the length of service of teachers was also a feature of the sample. Professional networks within Terrane were strong and during the second interview when teachers were asked about how they had approached the task of developing the curriculum, it became clear they were aware of what was taking place in other schools. As the information provided about SBCD taking place in Opal, Topaz and Sapphire was directly relevant these schools were then approached for inclusion in the study.

### **3.7 Development phase**

Prior to the main study there had been the opportunity to engage in fieldwork to pilot the interview guide and interview prompts for the study. The interview guides were piloted and revised for both interviews as a result of engaging with two male teachers from another local authority and a female teacher from within Terrane Local Authority (not included in the final study). Engaging with these three schools enabled the researcher to develop and refine the skills of asking questions and listening to responses. In addition to the valuable opportunity to practise interviewing and approaches to transcription, two important conclusions were reached as a result of the pilot study.

Firstly, over the course of the pilot interviews, it became clear that a repeated interview strategy would be required. This enabled the first interview with each teacher to explore their perceptions of CfE and its introduction, before the second interview which focused in more detail on their actions when developing the curriculum. Secondly, the researcher's overall conclusion was that conducting two interviews in this way would provide data relevant to the research aims, as the dual purpose of obtaining an insight into the experiences and actions of the teachers engaged in SBCE could be achieved.

### **3.8 The Interviews**

Interviewing is not straightforward or without its own set of theoretical considerations (Wengraf, 2001). In seeking to understand SBCE and to address the research questions at the heart of the study, it was necessary to engage teachers in dialogue to probe and explore their responses to questions. The theoretical framework of this study recognised that teachers had agency and the capacity to act consciously. As previously noted, there were ethical considerations related to the potential to do harm to the participants and issues affecting the study's claims to knowledge. The selection of participants for the study necessarily led to the inclusion of teachers who had consented to share their experiences and approaches to

SBCD. Therefore these accounts were provided by a particular group of teachers. These were not hostile interviewees. The teachers had expressed their desire to participate in the study. Semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for the researcher and each teacher to engage in dialogue about their experiences and actions related to SBCD (Flick, 2009).

There is an inherent subjectivity to the interview data obtained as it is a constructed account mediated and generated by the researcher (Flick, 2009; Miller & Glassner, 2011). Data captured provided an account of what each teacher said in the interview, but it was important not to conflate what was said in an interview as being the only way a teacher could or would talk about their experiences of SBCD. The interview data captured these teachers' responses to the questions posed and the prompting from the researcher at one moment in time. There is an acknowledged limitation of interviews in that although they can include interactions with depth and richness, ultimately what has been captured for analysis within the study is only a partial and particular account of these teachers' experiences of SBCD. However, for the purposes of this study, responsive semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to obtain a unique insight into the experiences of each teacher (Flick, 2009; Maxwell, 2013). As CfE had been published and a lot of the work related to the development of the curriculum in each school had already taken place, interviewing provided the only way of obtaining teachers' retrospective first-hand accounts of what had taken

place how they had engaged in the process of SBCD. Equally as the process of SBCD was ongoing, interviewing provided the opportunity to ask questions about what they had enacted or intended to enact during this specific period of curriculum change. It would not have been practicable or feasible to have obtained data based on observational approaches about these matters, which reinforced the efficacy of interviewing as a means of addressing the research questions (Maxwell, 2013).

Interviews with teachers were conducted face-to-face. All interviews took place in the teacher's place of work in a location of their choosing. These interviews enabled teachers to talk about their views on CfE, the changes taking place in education, their intentions for the physical education curriculum and what they had planned to enact in response to the changing policy context. In accordance with the research policy of the University of Edinburgh, informed consent was obtained from participants for the interview to be recorded and stored securely. Each interview was digitally recorded enabling the researcher to use the facilities within Nvivo to assist with the transcription and analysis of the data (Richards, 2009).

Securing interviews with each participating teacher took time and their busy schedules presented a challenge for data collection. Each participating teacher took part in two interviews of approximately 60 minutes during the

academic year 2010. The intention had been to undertake the first interview with each teacher, transcribe the data and then conduct the second interview. However, constraining factors required a more flexible approach and therefore there were some variations in the timings of the interviews during the period of the study to accommodate the availability of the teachers. The interviews for some teachers took place during the same week, before the start of the school day, for other teachers there was a period of four months between interviews, with the interviews taking place at different times of the day for the first and second interview.

In all cases the sequence of interviewing was the same, the first interview enabled teachers to explain the context for SBCD as they outlined their thoughts and perceptions related to the introduction of CfE (Appendix 1). The second interview focused on the actions curriculum leaders had undertaken and a discussion about the outcomes they sought to bring about as they planned and developed the physical education curriculum (Appendix 1). In the second interview the teachers discussed the specific decisions they had made in response to the curriculum principles outlined in 'Building the Curriculum 3' and other aspects of guidance and support they drew on to develop the physical education curriculum in their particular school (Scottish Government, 2008a). During the second interview some of the teachers were able to provide detailed plans of the physical education curriculum for that school. In chapter 5, a modified version of the information provided by

Emerald school is presented in Table 5-1, when presenting an aspect of the findings related to planning the curriculum. Through the exchanges that took place in the interviews, the teachers provided their analysis of curriculum guidance and offered an insight into what had taken place.

### **3.9 Data analysis approach and procedures**

This section provides an account of the way data were analysed, outlining the different but inter-related phases of this process. The information gathered during the course of the study created a wide-ranging data set, which was subsequently analysed, with the research questions providing the main driver for the analytical process. The information provided by the participants provided a view of the world from their perspective (Dowling Naess, 2001; Sparkes, 2002). In a qualitative study such as this, the interview guides and prompts were created with a view to capturing what teachers would say about their experiences related to the introduction of CfE. The questions asked in the interviews were not a mechanical conversion of the study's research questions (Wengraf, 2001). The interviews provided access to the observations, thoughts, lived experiences and perspectives of the teachers participating in SBCD. The resulting interview data in their raw form did of course require interpretation to allow the research questions to be addressed (Wengraf, 2001).

Selecting an appropriate approach to analysing the data was challenging. The researcher's judgement was that such an approach to analysis needed to take into consideration existing theoretical insights pertaining to SBCD, but not be determined by them. Although there is some merit in identifying in this study issues that resonate with previous research, to adopt this approach exclusively where data are made to 'fit' predefined codes or categories would have been inconsistent with the aims of the research. It was more important to recognise the potential in the data to generate new insights about SBCD. The approach adopted reflected the tradition of qualitative research, where there is no single 'correct' approach to the analysis of data. The analysis of data was eclectic in the sense that where appropriate it drew on both top-down and bottom-up approaches. The bottom-up approach drew on concepts and practices from grounded theory (Flick, 2009).

Initially, analysis took the form of memos and note taking after each interview which assisted the process of identifying similarities and differences across the curriculum leaders' interviews. A reflexive approach helped to keep in view the goal of the research and consider the role of the researcher in gathering and interpreting what had been captured. Reading, listening and reviewing data after each interview assisted in developing the researcher's ability to understand data. There was also a form of 'top-down' analysis as the researcher considered if what had been gathered related to themes identified in existing literature. This form of 'top-down' analysis was not



restricted to the initial phases of reading the data and later helped to categorise data and identify possible ways of dividing data into sections to aid in the process of analysis. To a degree the 'top-down' analysis employed what could be loosely considered to be 'sensitising concepts' from the literature to help provide a confirmation that data pertaining to the topic of enquiry had been obtained (Flick, 2009).

Later in the research process a more 'bottom up' approach took place as the researcher drew on his observations to create an account that captured the process of SBCD across the nine schools (Angen, 2000; Mason, 2002; Maxwell, 2013). Before providing a more detailed explanation of how data were categorised and how the researcher drew on his own observations about data, it is important to explain how data were reduced to aid analysis.

### **3.9.1 Organising and reducing data**

As part of the overall strategy for analysing data it was important to collate and organise all the material obtained. The task was made easier as Nvivo provides an electronic means of organising: audio files, transcripts, interview notes, participant data and information about each school. The study then moved into a phase of data reduction to aid the purpose of analysis. The interviews had already reduced the experiences and actions of each teacher into what could be considered in the time available for the two interviews.

The creation of transcripts represented another stage of data reduction.

It became clear that although Nvivo could assist in the transcription of data, this function rather reduced the possibilities for viewing the data outside the software programme. Although Nvivo could perform many useful functions to organise the gathered data, it did not prove to be fit for purpose for the creation of transcripts; therefore, word processing software was used to create transcriptions of each interview. This reduced the data as not all of the non-verbal details were captured. When each transcript was created the focus was more on the content that resulted from the interaction between the researcher and the teacher. It is acknowledged that this represented a further reduction of data for analysis. However the researcher listened to the audio files whenever clarification of meaning was required.

As part of a reflexive process transcription enabled the researcher to take time to make memos as he considered the relevance of what the teachers had said and how they were saying it (Wengraf, 2001). Even though electronic storage of data opens up possibilities for qualitative analysis and can assist in the systematic analysis of data, the researcher had to make decisions about the most productive approach to take. As each interview was transcribed a form of open coding took place and research memos were created. Although the creation of transcripts reduced data, it also led to the

creation of data in the form of memos.

### **3.9.2 Categorising data**

Two opposing goals pushed and pulled the categorisation of data. At one level coding, categorising and creating memos helped to build a more detailed picture of SBCD by making complex intertextual connections between the statements that a teacher made in his or her first and second interviews. This led to further connections being made across the interviews, and to documents that the teachers referred to in their interviews. Memos were written by the researcher to augment codes created to link data, resulting in the creation of more data and a complex matrix of codes and categories both within and about the data. The second goal when reading segments of text related to the process of reduction, with an intention to summarise the original text. The processes resulting from each of these two goals had a common aim, namely to locate meaning in the data and to enable the emergence of a more abstract, conceptual understanding of SBCD grounded within the study.

As each interview progressed it was not uncommon for teachers to move back and forward, adding or revising what they had previously stated. Therefore the approach to analysing interview material had to respect that during the interviews teachers often revised their responses, meaning that material relevant to a question was located in a variety of places. In the

creation, reading and re-reading of each interview transcript, the researcher was able to identify segments of data that represented discrete themes or units for analysis. It was essential that the data analysis was comprehensive (Silverman, 2001). One strategy for determining what was important or meaningful for the study within each transcript involved identifying issues that resonated with themes in the literature. This form of 'top down' coding was characterised by drawing on themes from the review of literature to make judgements about what could prove to be relevant information and enabled segments of text to be coded. These themes were grouped into broad categories on the basis that previous research highlighted their importance in matters of curriculum development. The table below provides a limited selection of categories and codes developed to create a coding framework which guided the researcher in reviewing each transcripts.

**Table 3-4 A selection of codes developed from the literature**

People	Context	Curriculum	Subject specific
Teacher	Timetable	Time	Physical Education
Pupils	Facilities	Priorities	Purpose
Parents	Local authority	Aims	Activities
Policy makers	CPD Events	Values	Physical activity
School management	Inspection	Design principles	Health

The overall approach was systematic, each of the participants' interviews was read and segments of text coded. After all of the transcripts had been analysed and coded, there began a process of considering similarities and

differences between the first and second interview and across each of the participants. The outcome of this 'top down' approach to coding the data was that while it assisted to some extent in organising and coding the transcripts, it opened up more questions about what had taken place. Categorising data solely on the basis of imposed themes did not adequately represent the experiences of these teachers and failed to capture the nuances of their actions.

Therefore the analysis moved from imposing codes on segments of text to more carefully considering how best to represent the actions of the participants and the process of SBCD. In the next phase of data analysis the researcher sought to generate codes from the data to capture more comprehensively the teachers' experiences and actions. This required reading and rereading, seeking to find alternative ways to determine what were important processes of SBCD. This more creative process led to connecting segments of text within and across interviews as the content and meaning of each teacher's statement were reconsidered. An important part of this process was considering the context of SBCD in each school, something that was judged to have been lost in the earlier 'top down' approach to data reduction and analysis.

When the analysis entered an inductive phase there was a shift in emphasis

as the researcher considered how to make sense of the different objects of study within the transcripts. Located in each transcript was information about how the teachers talked about CfE and how they had engaged in the process of SBCD. Rather than a detailed linguistic form of discourse analysis, the approach taken was to consider why the teachers stressed or emphasised particular realities of their task of introducing CfE in their school. In addition to how teachers talked, there were two related sources of information identified (Wengraf, 2001) that assisted in developing an understanding of what had taken place. Firstly, as each teacher talked about their work they provided 'objective information' about the process, for example, when teachers referred specifically to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events that had taken place within Terrane. Objective information also emerged *through* what the teachers said, for example, about how school policy reflected curriculum guidance and policy created by Terrane. This led to the researcher revisiting curriculum guidance and related documents to detect 'objective' information that could be drawn on to connect observations across the study. Secondly, each teacher provided subjective information about SBCD. Each interview contained an insight into subjective aspects of the interplay between a teacher, curriculum guidance and the context for SBCD.

### **3.9.3 Representing and presenting data**

In this section, two issues are considered, firstly how the researcher moved

through cycles of analysis which led to the creation of conceptual maps as an aid to representing the data. The other issue pertains to the decisions made concerning presenting findings to the reader. After what was an intense period of analysis the researcher was faced with the challenge of drawing analytical insights from the research process. Rather than seeking to uncover greater complexity and differences across the teachers' accounts, the focus shifted to constructing from the data an understanding of the process of SCBD in a way that structured and connected data.

Based on the researcher's understanding of the data through 'open-coding' a more general explanation of what had taken place in each school emerged. The value of this open-coding approach was that it enabled ideas about the data that may have not been explicitly identified by the teachers themselves or previously described in research to be captured (Maxwell, 2013). Drawing on this analytical work, the researcher engaged in a further phase of analysing by organising data into categories.

Initially the process of categorisation was organisational, broad themes were identified across transcripts and gathered together. This approach made it possible to consider the similarities and differences in the participants' accounts. A specific example, which features in chapter 4 was the curriculum time available for physical education in each school. Later, more substantive

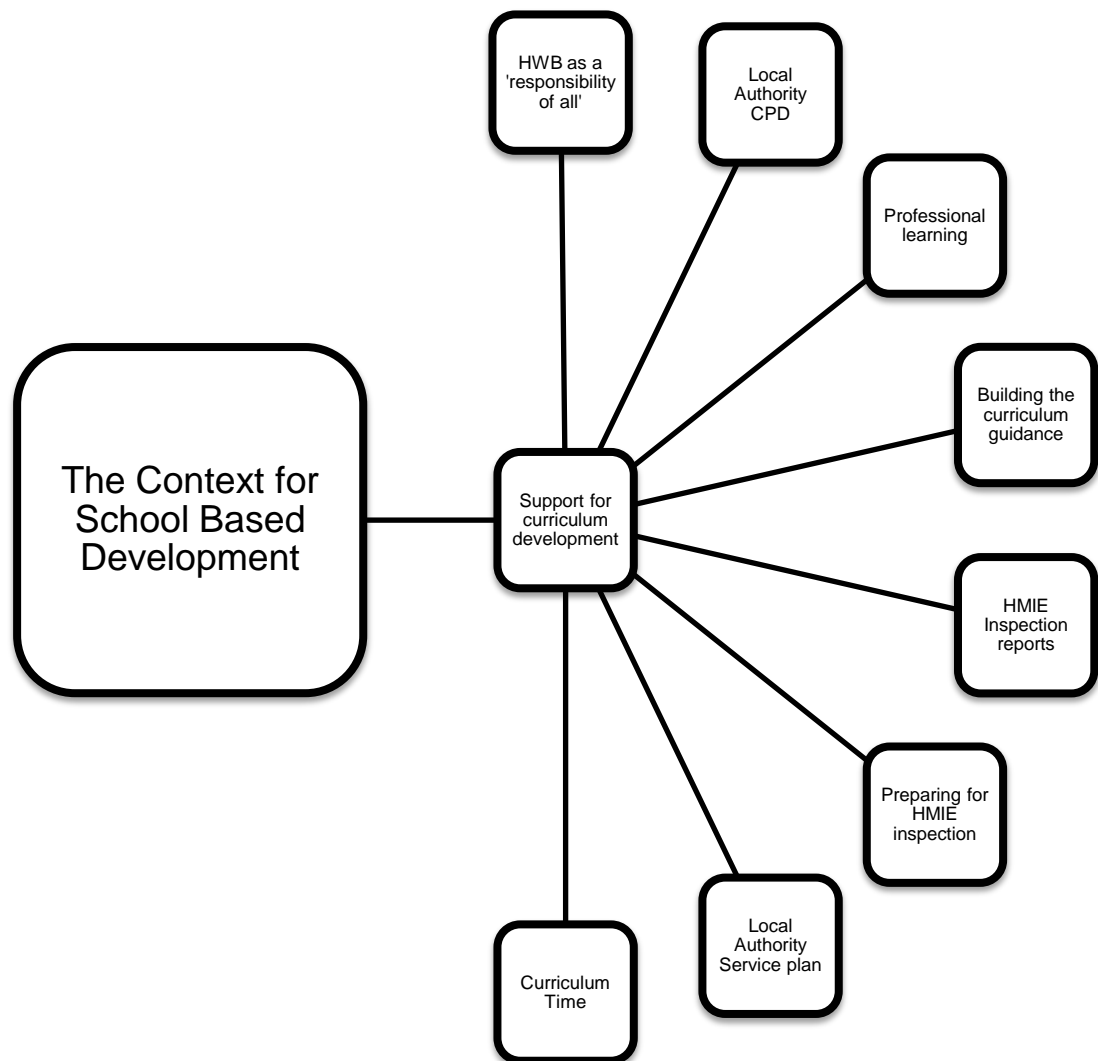
categories were developed through the analysis of the participants' statements about what this would mean as they worked to develop the curriculum. These categories were more descriptive, grounded in what participants had said and the analytical process the researcher undertook was to consider how this content may provide important insights about SBCD. In the final phases several cycles of analysis took place to sift through the data enabling the researcher to move beyond coding and categorising data organisationally and substantively. In these cycles of analysis, the researcher's own insights were used to develop a theoretical representation of SBCD (Maxwell, 2013). The transition from organising data, developing substantive categories to theoretically representing the data, placed a renewed requirement on the researcher to consider his role in presenting findings from the study (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 2007; Skeggs, 2002).

Developing theoretical insights from the study required the researcher to make decisions about plausible relations within data to generate the findings presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6. During this part of the research the researcher had to consider possible threats to validity. This took the form of questioning and considering if the theoretical representation of data was grounded in the material obtained, or if at this stage the researcher's creative connecting of themes reflected a particular desire to advance a 'hobby horse'.



Discussion about the analytical process with the supervisory team helped to keep in view the research questions and it also helped to guard against both of the threats outlined. Preliminary attempts to represent the findings of the study were presented for scrutiny in challenging conversations. In discussion, observations about data and what meaning had been derived from them were explored. These interactions aided the sense making process, as the supervisory team provided an informed critique of the emerging understanding of how connections could be made in the data.

Figure 3-1 below provides an indication of how the researcher moved from freehand drawings, to more formal models to represent data and enable findings to be presented.



**Figure 3-1 An example of representing data**

The three research questions provided an organising principle, as diagrams were created. One of the most challenging aspects of the study was finding a way to build from the accounts of each teacher's experiences and actions an overarching insight into what had taken place across the sample of the nine schools. The researcher had to find a way to generate a conceptual understanding consistent with the analytical process which could also be

made intelligible for an external audience.

As the researcher engaged in the writing process themes and issues emerging from the analysis were gathered together for presentation. As drafts of chapters were created, new ways of presenting information related to the research questions were considered. Representing a complex interrelated process seemed to lend itself to the creation of figures to guide the reader through the findings and this has been employed in the chapters that follow. Over the course of the next three chapters a series of figures have been used to encapsulate the findings. Extracts from interview material and selected information from other data sources are used to aid the reader explore how the findings have been generated. In chapter 7 a conceptual overview of SBCE grounded in the study is presented.

### **3.10 Summary**

Adjustments to the research design during the study were made to guard against paradigmatic or methodological fragmentation, these changes enabled the researcher to maintain the focus on the research aims and questions. Drawing on the perspectives of key informants, one key intention was to develop an explanatory account of 'why' and 'how' context, actions and outcomes in curriculum change (Maxwell, 2012; Shipway, 2011). Consistent with the approach outlined by Scott (2010), Moore (2004) and

Danermark et al. (2002) the point of departure taken by this study was that the curriculum guidance related to CfE was an object that teachers could engage with and come to know about. The approach adopted sought to acknowledge that each teacher's interpretation of curriculum guidance was made at a particular point of time, and there was the possibility of perspectives shifting over time. In addition, another researcher might have come up with a distinctly different reading of this data set. Against the background of an alertness to alternative interpretations, through close analysis of the teachers' accounts it became possible for the researcher to generate his own defensible theoretical explanation of the data.

The analysis of data has generated findings that address the research questions, in the findings chapters that follow, chapter 4 addresses the first research question. Chapter 5 primarily presents the findings related to the second research question and chapter 6 focuses on the third research question. The interplay between all of the elements of the research process has enabled the presentation of the findings within the theoretical framework outlined in section 3.3, and made it possible to consider the context of teachers' actions and their exercise of agency in SBCD.



## Chapter 4

### School Based Curriculum Development –The Context for Curriculum Leaders

#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 highlighted selected literature pertaining to the process of SBCD and curriculum enactment, identifying the importance of developing an appreciation of how teachers respond to, and interpret, policy in physical education in Scotland (MacLean et al., 2015). The study reported here sought to understand curriculum leaders' actions as they engaged in a process of SBCD. The findings of the study are now presented over three chapters.

This first chapter of the findings focuses on the themes emerging from the data related to contextual aspects of curriculum enactment as perceived and interpreted by the teachers. Figure 4-1 provides an overview of 'the context for SBCD' and the three core themes of *accountability*, *attainment* and *support for curriculum development*. The figure provides a diagrammatic representation of the context for curriculum development across the nine schools and shows how selected elements of the findings are connected to the core themes. The chapter begins by focusing on *accountability*, bringing into the foreground how the Local Authority's 'Service Plan' shaped, and to a

certain extent constrained, curriculum leaders' engagement in SBCD. The interplay between the 'Service Plan', the 'National Performance Framework' and the focus of school senior management teams on *attainment* is also teased out. The focus then shifts to reveal what supported curriculum development, showing how the Local Authority and the individual and collective actions of curriculum leaders were an important catalyst for SBCD.

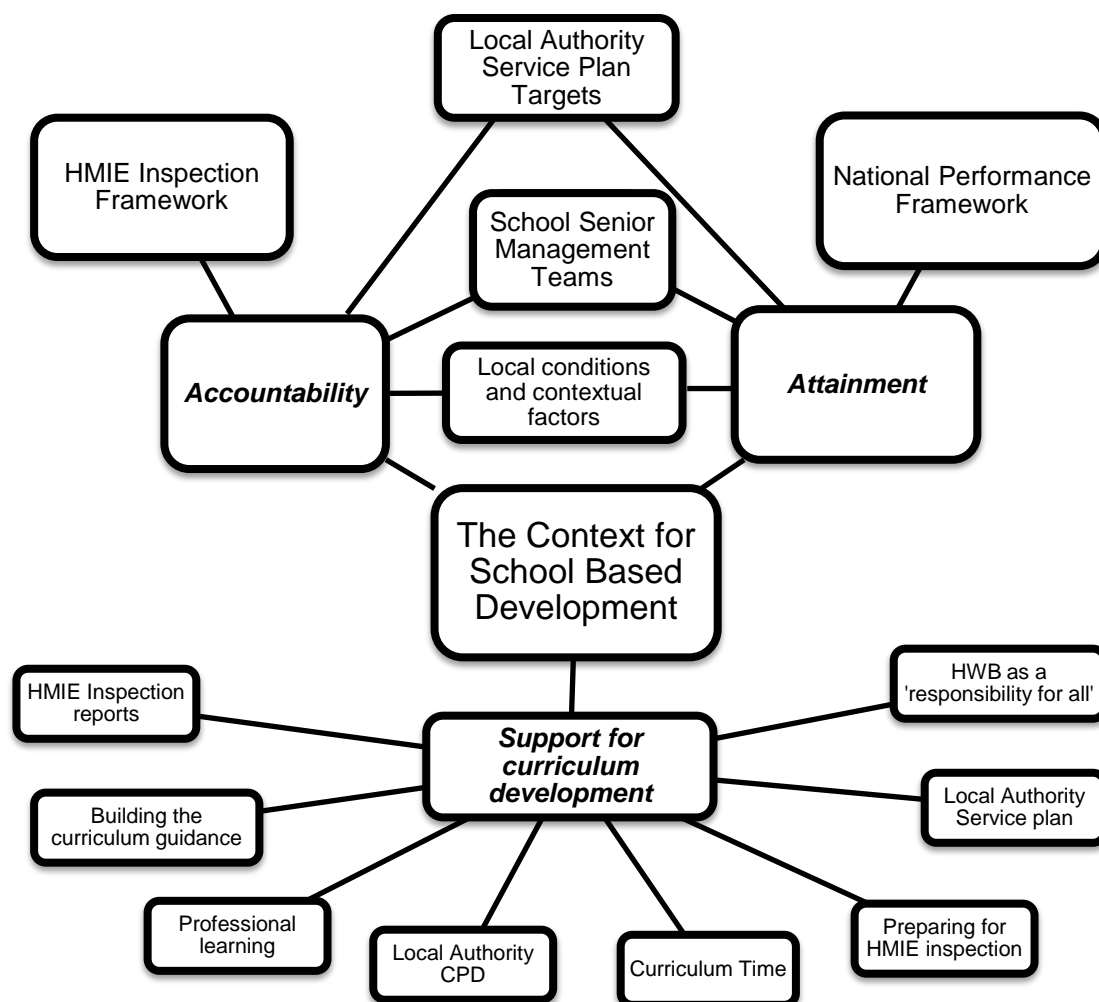


Figure 4-1 The Context for SBCD

The chapter also highlights two orders of SBCD with distinctive elements and interrelated processes (which are explored in separate chapters). Chapter 5 presents what has been conceptualised as first order SBCD and explores if the relocation of physical education into the newly formed area of 'Health and wellbeing' had transformed the way curriculum leaders thought about developing the curriculum. Chapter 6 focuses on second order SBCD and the actions of curriculum leaders as they worked to design and create a curriculum that met the aspirations of CfE. Taken as a whole the three chapters: detail the contextual factors constraining, patterning and enabling SBCD; explain how curriculum leaders sought to make sense of CfE; and outline their engagement in the process of curriculum development as they designed curricula in physical education.

## **4.2 Accountability**

### **4.2.1 The Local Authority's Service Plan**

The Scottish Government in 'Building the Curriculum 3' stated that: 'every child and young person is entitled to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, with a continuous focus on literacy and numeracy and health and wellbeing' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 15). Local Authorities are responsible for educational provision and required to report on centrally determined performance indicators which have been operationalised as targets. The Terrane Local Authority's 'Children and Families Service Plan



2009-12', (referred to hereafter as the Service Plan), required responses from schools against strategic objectives<sup>9</sup> (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b).

The Service Plan established a regime of *accountability* in terms of *attainment* targets for examinations, with results at SCQF level 6 ('Highers') considered to be the important benchmark in high stakes assessments. The school management teams were responsible for collating and providing the information to the Local Authority. Curriculum leaders were acutely aware of how important *attainment* was and that the actions they took in designing the curriculum needed to maximise the possibility of increasing *attainment*. The Service Plan acted as a mechanism to ensure that the Scottish Government's and Local Authority strategic objectives were delivered. However, as schools engaged in the process of SBCD it was not only the Service Plan that they needed to address.

Learning and Teaching Scotland produced a series of documents titled 'Building the curriculum' to support professional reflection and guide SBCD. Terrane also created a guidance document 'S1-S3 Curriculum Architecture' (hereafter abbreviated to Curriculum Architecture) in October 2009 as part of its role in supporting SBCD (Terrane Local Authority, 2009a). Taken as a

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that Quartz school is an independent school outwith the remit of the Local Authority. However, the school is located within the geographical area of this Local Authority and formed part of the provision of education within this region of Scotland. Quartz school is subject to HMIE inspection and therefore is required to provide details on attainment as part of this process.

whole these guidance documents shaped the context for SBCD. They made explicit reference to, perhaps the most significant driver for change in the school system in Scotland, the *HMIE inspection process* (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a).

#### 4.2.2 The HMIE Inspection Framework

All of the curriculum leaders in the study described how HMIE inspection impacted on the processes of SBCD. As an illustration, the following extracts from the interview with James indicate how his, and other curriculum leaders', actions were patterned by inspection.

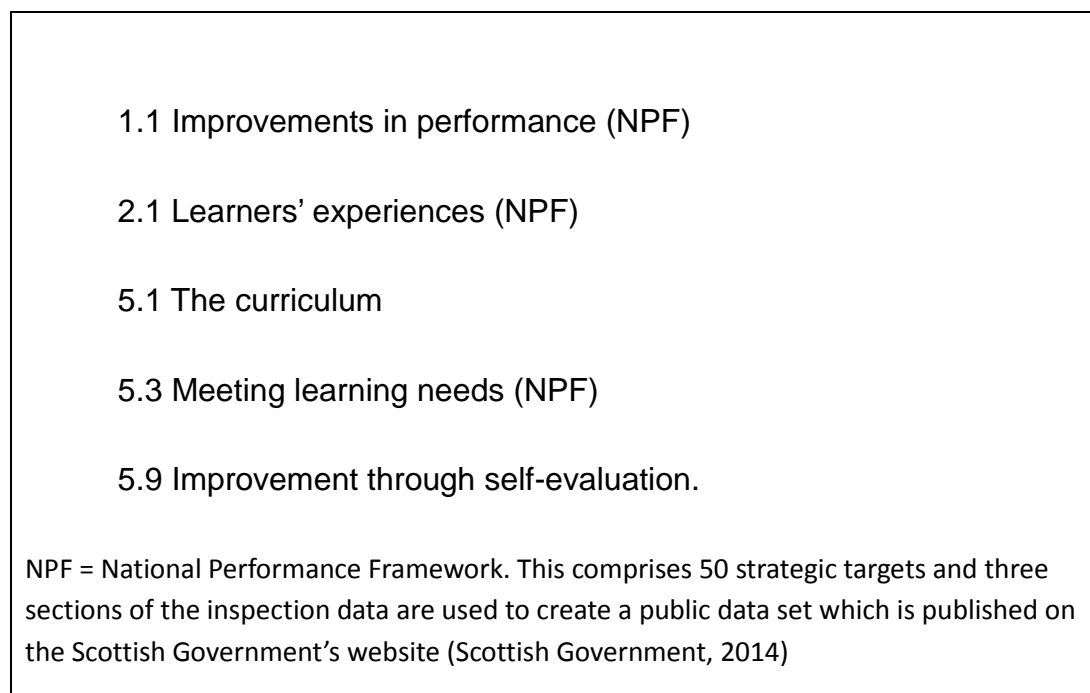
**James – Ruby School:** The quality indicators are obviously quite a key thing in what we're delivering now. It's obviously what HMI[E inspectors] are going to be looking towards and the school [senior management team] are very proactive in their quality assurance ... making sure we're aware of the quality indicators [in the inspection framework]. We're quality assuring it within departments that we are...one quality indicator [is] meeting the needs of all our pupils, meeting learners needs et cetera.....

So we could then develop strategies if there [were] weaknesses to be identified and by all accounts I think that's where HMI[E] are going with this as well. They're going to come in for snippets of lessons and seeing that. They're going to compare and collate all the information together and we're just trying to stay ahead of the game a little bit by doing it within schools ourselves. (James interview 1, p. 10- 11)

James' observations allow us to appreciate the complex interplay of contextual factors shaping SBCD. The Scottish Government published the curriculum framework. Learning and Teaching Scotland provided guidance on curriculum development. The Local Authority supported, monitored and

undertook inspections to assist schools introduce CfE. The participants in the study were all aware that the HMIE inspection process would be the touchstone for teachers and senior management teams.

Schools are accountable for their actions with judgements about the quality of education made by HMIE in relation to the nine key areas set out in '*How good is our school?*' (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a). Inspection reports provide an assessment of a school in the five areas outlined in figure 4-2 below.



**Figure 4-2 The five quality indicators reported on by HMIE in school inspections**

The numbers (e.g. 1.1 – 5.9) indicate specific sections of the key areas of *‘How good is our school?’*, interestingly, James and John made direct reference to these numbers in their interviews, indicating a close working knowledge of the documentation which informed the inspection process. External inspection exerted a powerful influence on the teachers’, thinking and actions. James’ statement below provided an indication that it was almost as if HMIE inspectors were perceived to be the ‘arbiter’; the judgements reached after an inspection overshadowed self-evaluation or internal quality assurance measures:

**James – Ruby School:** we don’t know whether it’s right or wrong until [there is] ....an HMIE [inspection]. So the first school that gets [laughs], gets hit by an inspection, things could change. (James Interview 1, p. 5)

The uncertainty captured in James’ statement and his desire to get it ‘right’ as judged by an HMIE inspection, were felt by all of the curriculum leaders who desired to have a positive outcome when inspected.

When James stated ‘we don’t know’ he was referring to teachers of physical education across Terrane Local Authority, reflecting a widely held view that it was essential to get CfE ‘right’ to ensure good outcomes for HMIE inspections and for pupils. Curriculum change for all of the curriculum leaders was accompanied by uncertainty, moving into the unknown combined

challenges with opportunities for change; but they were certain that whatever changes were enacted would have to meet with the approval of HMIE inspectors. Performing badly in an inspection was not an option. The Local Authority, school management teams and teachers were all working within a changing curriculum context, but there were no changes to the HMIE inspection framework (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007b).

#### **4.2.3 School senior management teams**

The HMIE inspection framework and the Local Authority Service Plan were important reference points for school senior management teams. In preparation for inspection and as part of their quality improvement processes, senior management teams required curriculum leaders to provide data against the quality indicators contained within '*How good is our school?*' and the Service Plan. Curriculum leaders recounted how they were held to account by members of the senior management team and were expected to create Departmental Improvement Plans containing quantitative data about *attainment*.

**Emma – Jade School:** So I think getting the time to digest all that [School Improvement Plan] and then do something about it [create a DIP], and then monitor the impact it's having – that's the difficult bit, for me, because we've all got our monitoring, evaluating calendars as [curriculum leaders], and I think we do it fairly well as a school, but it's the time it takes to then monitor [the DIP] and see the impact that it's having on pupils that's quite...it is a challenge, it's very much a challenge, alongside ... planning [for the introduction of CfE]. (Emma Interview 2, p. 16-17)

The publication of 'School Quality Improvement Plans' on the Local Authority's website enables external scrutiny of these documents which display a school's 'successes and achievements' with an emphasis on the results at SCQF Level 6 ('Higher'). Curriculum leaders were acutely aware of how important it was to ensure that the curriculum as enacted would support *attainment* in 'high stakes assessments' (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b; Thorburn, 2007).

#### **4.2.4 Local conditions and contextual factors**

While this study has found that systems of *accountability* had a shaping effect on schools, as they embarked on the process of SBCE, there was not a uniform pattern of responses from schools or teachers. The complex interaction between the texts of CfE, '*How good is our school?*' and the Local Authority's Service Plan led to somewhat different responses across schools. In each school the senior management team had responsibility for the resources at its disposal, and the findings highlight the important role they played in the organisation of the timetable and the allocation of staffing. In addition, the fabric of the building, school roll, the number of staff, duration of periods and the time available for physical education were all specific local conditions that, to a certain extent, determined what could be enacted. As this study progressed it became increasingly clear that SBCE could only be

understood by developing an in-depth perspective on the local context in which it was taking place. Indeed, curriculum leaders indicated that what they were doing in their school was different to what was taking place in other schools within the same Local Authority.

**Emma – Jade School:** But we've not done anything radical where – and I'm not suggesting that radical is not good, in the slightest, because I know some ... schools have adopted a really creative [curriculum] – but we've not done anything where there's an enriching afternoon, or ...you know, the timetable is as is.. (Emma Interview 2, p.11)

The curriculum leaders were aware of differences between schools that included: levels of attainment at 'Higher'; the facilities available for physical education; the expertise of staff; and variations in the structure of the school day.

The Local Authority played a significant role in shaping school curricula. The Scottish Government's priorities for education included specific targets for the provision of physical education and a whole school focus on HWB. Within this discourse and policy context, the Local Authority's strategic objectives sought to address these wider concerns, and in turn create local strategies, and determine priorities for schools. Senior management teams, via their School Quality Improvement Plan, were expected to enact a strategy that would enable both the externally determined elements of policy and the internal functioning of the school to co-exist, leading to improved educational outcomes (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b).

Rather than physical education being absent from the policy discourse, as in Bechtel and O'Sullivan's (2007) findings, it has a degree of prominence in the Scottish context. The outcomes and performance measures contained within the Local Authority's Service Plan have shaped the way schools have responded to SBCD. For example, there are specific targets focused on increasing the number of children and young people achieving qualifications.

### **4.3 Attainment**

#### **4.3.1 The Local Authority and curriculum for 'attainment'**

Of the Local Authority's five strategic objectives, two 'success and achievements' and 'children and young people are physically and emotionally healthy' had narrative commentary and performance measures of direct relevance to the analysis of the study's data (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b).

This section focuses on how the strategic objectives outlined for 'success and achievements' shaped the context for curriculum development.

Curriculum leaders indicated that although the focus in the first year of CfE was on developing the curriculum for S1, the need to secure high levels of *attainment* in the senior phase was never far from their thoughts.

**James – Ruby School:** I think the real benefits of it [CfE] are going to be seen in years to come, obviously with final destinations a key player in what the Curriculum for Excellence is all about. Our S1s, we've set up achievement boards and things for them recently and they're seeing their achievements now more than they ever have in this school. (James Interview 1, p. 18)



Extracts from the Service Plan (Table 4-1) illustrate the context for SBCD and highlight how prominent *attainment* was in the texts created by the Local Authority. 'Success and achievements' was operationalised by setting annual attainment targets. For 2010/11, the year CfE was introduced, no attainment targets were set against the SCQF levels. However, an absence of targets did not translate into an absence of pressure to attain the best possible outcomes. Curriculum leaders were acutely aware of how important *attainment* was to the school's senior management team.

**Table 4-1 Selected targets from strategic objective two: success and achievements**

Outcome	Performance measure	Current performance (March 2009)	Target 2009/10	Target 2010/11	Target 2011/12
Children and young people have high quality learning experiences and their learning needs are met		% of schools achieving positive inspection reports. (% of schools that achieve satisfactory, good, very good or excellent) in:		New process implemented in August 2008. No full year baseline is available at March 2009.  Targets have been set below. These will be reviewed once a full year baseline has been achieved, and reassessed annually as trend data becomes available.	
	-improvement in performance -learners' experiences -meeting learning needs - improvement through self-evaluation -the curriculum	-	75%	80%	85%
	Increase % of pupils achieving 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 or above	2006/08 - 22%	23%	-	-

From the curriculum leaders' responses it was evident that 'Success and achievements' were thought of in terms of *attainment* at 'Higher'. The targets set out in the Service Plan may not have been directly referred to; but it was evident that the school management teams had an impact on school culture as they expected curriculum leaders through their actions to improve attainment. An example of how the focus on *attainment* influenced Topaz school's management team is represented in the following extract from John's first interview.

**John – Topaz School:** The very first conversation you have in August isn't about 'how did the rugby team go?' Unfortunately it's not about 'how did your S1 class cope with the experiences and outcomes?' It [the headteacher] says 'What were your grades like? Why? Show me them on this grid. Give me your script, your improvement plan, your quality improvement plan!' (John Interview 1, p. 12)

The use of 'it' to refer to the headteacher perhaps indicates John's perception of the regime of *accountability* in Topaz school. The national average for 2010/11 for pupils achieving 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6 is 24%, for the Local Authority it was 28% and it was 40% for Topaz school (See Table 4-2 below).

**Table 4-2 Summary of attainment: percentage of pupils by school achieving 5+ awards at SCQF Level 6**

School Name	2010/11
<i>Ruby</i>	1
<i>Jade</i>	14
<i>Opal</i>	14
<i>Coral</i>	15
<i>Emerald</i>	19
<i>Amber</i>	40
<i>Sapphire</i>	40
<i>Topaz</i>	40
<i>Quartz</i>	93.6
<i>Local Authority Average</i>	28
<i>National Average</i>	24

In Topaz school where attainment is high and already above the target set, John's interview provides a stark reminder of the expectations of the senior management team to maintain and improve attainment. At the time of the interview John was engaged in planning the S1 curriculum, but he was aware that what the headteacher valued would be levels of attainment in the senior phase with a focus on 'Higher' results.

Overall, curriculum leaders' accounts clearly indicated how the focus on developing new courses for S1 pupils was patterned by their concerns for the future. They were mindful that changes to the S1 curriculum had to support the overarching aims of promoting *attainment*.

**Dawne –Amber School:** they're [Scottish Government] asking you to kind of radically.. well, in theory, they're asking you to radically change something with no money (laughs), no resources (laughs), you know, so I don't know quite what you're meant to do. So in a school like ours, which is very kinda middle of the road ... we don't go for radical because we have fairly good exam results and parents that are fairly articulate, and you don't want to rock the boat dramatically (Dawne Interview 1, p.11)

Curriculum leaders all indicated that issues of *attainment* presented a challenge and shaped the way they approached SBCD. Each school had different challenges related to *attainment*, and curriculum leaders' perceptions may be more readily understood when viewed against historic and current levels of *attainment* across the nine schools.

The variability in attainment across the nine schools led to differing perceptions about the possibility for innovation. Curriculum leaders in Amber, Sapphire, Topaz and Quartz reported senior management teams were wary of changing curricula that were already proving to be 'successful'. James indicated he had greater freedom to create the S1 curriculum at Ruby school, when compared to John at Topaz school. James was acutely aware that given the historically low levels of attainment in his school, developing a curriculum that would improve *attainment* was a central feature of his role. In

the extract below James also noted there were ‘restrictions’ that John would face at Topaz school given the senior management team’s focus on *attainment*.

**James – Ruby School:** Attainment is still the key here, but without a shadow of a doubt I think it [CfE] will be easier to implement here than what it will [be] up there [John : Topaz School], because they’ll have more restrictions than I think we will here. (James Interview 2, p. 1)

James’ statement provided an insight into how the focus on *attainment* at Local Authority level influenced the actions of senior management teams and in turn shaped the priorities for curriculum leaders. However, the findings also show that despite the performative thrust of this focus on attainment, curriculum leaders’ actions were not *wholly* determined by concerns related to academic attainment.

#### **4.3.2 School senior management teams**

The curriculum leaders in the study expressed care and concern for pupils’ education and well-being in the broadest senses, yet they regarded their senior management team’s priorities as less holistic. The extract below reveals how, based on her past experiences, Dawne imagined her response to CfE would be evaluated by Amber school’s senior management team.

**Dawne –Amber School:** We're, I'm never interviewed about my 5-14<sup>10</sup> results ever, ever. Nobody's interested in core unless they're all misbehaving. And all they [senior management team] do is they [senior management team] pull us [curriculum leaders] in about our standard grade and higher results. (Dawne Interview 1, p. 62)

John and Dawne were not the only curriculum leaders to express concerns about the potential impact of changes to the S1-S3 curriculum on attainment. Susan the QIO made this statement echoing the anxieties that curriculum leaders expressed about ensuring attainment did not suffer during this period of curriculum change:

**Susan – QIO for HWB Terrane:** we need to get all this done [SBCD] and we need to know what the National 4, 5 and 6 looks like, because that's actually what we're judged on. It's what parents judge it on, it's what schools are judged on. It's what local authorities, HMI[E] still judge them on. So until that changes, which it never will, then it's very difficult to say to PE staff, don't worry about the SQA<sup>11</sup> [and the arrangements for National Qualifications]. (Susan Interview 1, p. 12)

Performance in high stakes assessment is a core element of how teachers and schools are judged. Curriculum leaders were seeking to imagine the future and consider how the changes they were making to the S1 curriculum would support the longer-term aims of increasing *attainment*. As findings presented in Chapter 6 show, curriculum leaders were able to, and did,

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<sup>10</sup> See the footnote on p. 46 about 5-14 curriculum guidance which preceded Curriculum for Excellence.

<sup>11</sup> The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is a non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government. They develop courses which are taken by young people, every qualification it offers is allocated and level and credit value against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Universities usually allocate places on the basis of awards at SQA Higher (referred to as 'Highers') which are at SCQF Level 6.

exercise their own judgements about the design of their school's physical education curricula.

In summary, a curriculum leader's vision for the curriculum as enacted for S1 to S3, extended into the future as they were seeking to prepare for the changes to the senior phase (S4-S6) where examination courses would be taught. Curriculum leaders were aware that their aspirations for the physical education curriculum had to be framed within a culture of *attainment* and *accountability*. In the senior phase, schools and curriculum leaders were expected to ensure high levels of attainment in examinations.

#### **4.3.3 The curriculum for 'others'**

It was clear that the Service Plan influenced Susan's actions as the QIO for the Local Authority. The Service Plan also provided an important frame of reference for senior management teams, influencing their approach to performance management as they required curriculum leaders to create DIPs to address 'strategic objectives'. The preceding section has established that issues of academic attainment featured in the curriculum leaders' responses. In the interviews there were occasions where curriculum leaders expressed their personal view about the content of the curriculum, but tellingly their language reflected the influence that entities outside of their department and their own immediate sphere of influence were having on their actions. The

findings bring to the fore that each curriculum leader's decision making was not wholly a personal response to CfE but a carefully nuanced assessment of how, through their professional actions, they could address the expectations of 'others'.

During the analysis of interview transcripts, it became clear that '*they*' was repeatedly used when teachers were providing an account of their decision making. In the extract from Dawne's interview, (presented above on page 125), *they* refers to her school's senior management team, however in other interviews it was less clear who *they* referred to. As will be revealed, the participants talked about '*others*' in the process of SBCD. The extracts below highlight that SBCD was a response to an external 'top-down' change that required local action from curriculum leaders.

**Jackie – Pearl School:** I just feel sometimes that the people like to reinvent the wheel. I am very aware of that sometimes. I didn't believe in the Curriculum for Excellence until I saw the pilots working [at the Terrane CPD events]. When CfE first came out I just thought here we go! *They* just want us to tick new boxes. *They* are putting in words that we are already doing anyway, you know I just thought that *they* were just trying to reinvent the wheel, I just thought here we go, but actually I have come on board recently after seeing these pilots and talking to other members of staff. (Jackie Pilot Interview, p. 10) [emphasis added]

Jackie expressed a suspicion, mirrored in other interviews, that '*they*' required teachers to perform tasks for the sake of addressing the policy imperatives of an externally determined curriculum framework.



Her initial perspective was that CfE required surface level, presentational change. However, after the Terrane CPD events Jackie appeared to view CfE more positively as she began to actively engage in the process of SBCE. Issues of *accountability* remained a pressing concern. In preparation for an imagined future expectations of external agencies (Local Authority, Learning and Teaching Scotland and or HMIE), Jackie explained that even though there was uncertainty surrounding the expectations for assessment, she was going to ensure there was a system in place.

**Jackie – Pearl School:** I am becoming increasingly concerned about the assessment side of things because of the timescale .... and we don't want to be at the point where *they* decide what the assessment is, and we then have to back track. So we are making sure that there is something in place if *they*[HMIE] come in for inspection. (Jackie Pilot Interview, p. 12) [emphasis added]

Jackie used '*they*' throughout her interview to represent external entities ranging from parents, Learning and Teaching Scotland, the senior management team, members of the Local Authority, HMIE inspectors and Scottish Government. Her use of '*they*' is an indication of the fact that curriculum leaders' perceived that it was their responsibility to create the curriculum so that it addressed the requirements of 'others'. This theme of the 'other', initially detected in the pilot phase, emerged strongly in the interviews of the main study.

**Gary – Quartz School:** I don't think it's the right format but that's a different argument, really, and *they're* [SQA, Scottish Government] now reviewing it to National 4 and 5 so we're going through that cycle again. (Gary Interview 1, p. 3) [emphasis added]

**Oliver – Emerald School:** I think *they're* [Scottish Government, Policymakers, HMIE] trying to get away from that, *they* don't want that now, *they* want a case of where you look at the class, what sort of stage are the class at and what can *they* [the class] do within the timeframe that you have and how can you set something that's appropriate to them that *they're* [the class] going to benefit from. (Oliver Interview 1, p. 9) [emphasis added]

**Katie – Sapphire School:** It was almost like somebody at the top had their plan, but *they* wanted the people at the bottom to come up with the plan so it was their plan, [so when] anything *they* [teachers] came up with, didn't meet...[with] the ultimate plan [it] was, sort of, thrown back and said, no, this can't happen. (Katie Interview 1, p. 17) [emphasis added]

**Dawne –Amber School:** ..we have to pay attention to what *they* want us to do in terms of the Curriculum for Excellence, 'cause *they've* made it pretty clear in a hand-out recently....HMIE inspection represents, a kind of, checking up on quality assurance, and quality assurance, self-evaluation's just such a huge part of teaching now. (Dawne Interview 2, p. 18) [emphasis added]

The 'other' was an ever present concern for curriculum leaders such as

Dawne: what would 'they' think about their efforts; what did 'they' want to see?

The 'other' featured strongly in curriculum leaders' descriptions of their decision making, and reflected their perception of how their actions would be evaluated within and outwith the school. Thus curriculum leaders' responses to CfE reflected how significant they felt external measures of *accountability*,

and *attainment* were. It was clear that curriculum leaders were giving prominence to how HMIE would judge their actions. This was not an obsessive anxiety that excluded concerns about pupils or the learning process. As chapter 6 explores in greater depth there was care and concern for what took place in physical education with the desire to ensure that the experiences were meaningful and worthwhile for pupils. It was quite simply that at this early phase of planning the curriculum when the interviews took place, there was more of a focus on getting it right in the eyes of school senior management teams, the Local Authority and HMIE.

#### **4.4 Support for Curriculum Development**

##### **4.4.1 Curriculum time for physical education**

**Emma – Jade School:** next year for the first time we are getting two periods in S2 otherwise that would have been quite difficult [to introduce changes to the curriculum]. (Emma Interview 1, p. 10)

As Emma indicated, an important consideration in SBCD was the *structure* of the school day and the *curriculum time* available for physical education. The Local Authority sought to influence the allocation of the available curriculum time. The explicit statement in its ‘Curriculum Architecture’ document that ‘All pupils in S1 should have 2 hours of quality physical education each week in order to meet the expectations set out in the experiences and outcomes for health and well-being’ provided a very clear message that schools needed to meet this specific requirement (Terrane Local Authority, 2009a, p. 5).

The clarity of the statement in CfE and the 'Curriculum Architecture' document for the allocation of 2 hours of physical education per week, contrasted markedly with the target set out in the Service Plan. Strategic objective 4, 'Children and young people are physically and emotionally healthy' was to be achieved by increasing the average time pupils participated in quality physical education (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b, p. 5). The target set for all year groups was 110 mins. per week in 2010/11, rising to 120 mins. in 2011/12. Terrane Local Authority had reinterpreted the CfE guidance by setting a reduced and phased target (Scottish Government, 2009a).

When the study was conducted the curriculum leaders in Amber, Opal, Jade, Topaz, and Quartz schools had less than 120 minutes per week for S1 classes and this presented them with a challenge in meeting the expectations of promoting healthy and active lifestyles (Scottish Government, 2009a). The table below provides an overview of the curriculum time for physical education in the nine schools.

**Table 4-3 Curriculum time for Physical Education**

	Curriculum time for PE 2010/2011			
School Name	S1	S2	S3	S4
<i>Amber</i>	60 mins	60 mins	120 mins	120 mins
<i>Ruby</i>	150 mins	150 mins	150 mins	150 mins
<i>Coral</i>	150 mins	150 mins	150 mins	150 mins
<i>Sapphire</i>	120 mins	120 mins	60 mins	60 mins
<i>Opal</i>	114 mins	114 mins	114 mins	114 mins
<i>Emerald</i>	150 mins	100 mins	100 mins	100 mins
<i>Jade</i>	100 mins	100 mins	100 mins	100 mins
<i>Topaz</i>	100 mins	100 mins	100 mins	100 mins
<i>Quartz</i>	100 mins	100 mins	100 mins	100 mins

The main reason that curriculum leaders reported for not securing two hours for physical education in the timetable was that schools organised their timetables into periods to segment the day. Amber and Sapphire schools operated on 60 minute periods, but the other schools organised the school day differently. This required allocating three periods of 50 minutes, as happened at Ruby and Coral school, and exceeding the target, or changing the whole structure of the timetable to provide the expected 120 minutes of physical education per week.

These findings reinforce the point that Eisner (2005) and Kirk (2010) make about the power of the timetable in shaping and determining what is possible in schools. Quartz, an independent school outwith Local Authority control, reported that their timetabling was remaining the same; the other eight schools indicated that changes to the timetabling were taking place and, as a result, curriculum time for physical education would increase. The role of the Local Authority in making two hours of physical education a priority, is reflected in Susan's interview, when she stated:

**Susan – Terrane QIO:** We're pushing the two hours of PE, so by 2013 all S1 to S3 pupils will be getting two hours of PE. This year all first years currently get it and next year, all first and second years will get it and the following year S1 to S3 will all have two hours of PE. (Susan Interview 1, p. 14)

The time available for physical education was one issue and how the time had been allocated on the timetable during the school week was another matter which influenced what teachers could plan. Coral school had exceeded the target of 120 minutes by making significant changes to the timetable for all pupils. It had organised the time so that the 150 minutes for physical education each week were the final three periods of the school day, enabling travel to offsite facilities, something that two separate 50 minute periods at Topaz school could not provide.

Oliver explained the importance of timetabling decisions in supporting curriculum development. He stressed an issue common to all of the schools:

**Oliver – Emerald School:** It just depends, depends when they come because we've got half a year group at a time, so we might have four practical classes that will rotate round four different activities as they come. Again, because [of] logistics, our pool is shared with Amethyst school. So, for one term we'll have it on three mornings a week and two afternoons a week, and then the next term we switch round. So, first and foremost we have to make sure that every class gets swimming and it's put in like that first. (Oliver Interview 1, p. 13)

Teachers of physical education had to take into account these practicalities when they embarked on SBCD and considered planning the curriculum and deciding how to use the time available for lessons. The Scottish Government can set targets for curriculum time and the Local Authority can reinforce this; but in reality it was the resources available in each school in terms of time, staffing and facilities which determined how the timetable operated and how curriculum time was used.

A finer grained analysis of how the allocation of curriculum time supported curriculum leaders as they engaged in SBCD is returned to in Chapter 4, but at this point it is important to note that even with directives from Scottish Government since 2004 and the inclusion of the targets for increasing curriculum time for physical education, only four out of the nine schools at the time of the study were meeting the 120 minutes in S1 (Scottish Executive, 2004b). Of all the nine schools, Ruby has the smallest number of pupils. James indicated that this gave the senior management team more flexibility

when timetabling physical education as there were fewer classes to timetable for the department. The other reason, as reported by James, was the school's HMIE inspection in 2006, which highlighted that there was no provision for physical education in S4, and this led to changes in timetabling.

#### **4.4.2 Preparing for, and responding to, inspection**

The inspection process can be very influential and can lead directly or indirectly to an increase in curriculum time for physical education. A finding of this study is that schools that had had an inspection in the two years before the introduction of CfE met the target of two hours per week for physical education (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 84). The HMIE report for Coral school specifically stated that: 'The school needs to review its provision for physical education and religious and moral education to ensure sufficiency' (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2009, p. 4). Sarah reported that the changes to the timetable at Coral school were made not just to address curriculum time for physical education but to address wider concerns raised about achievement and attainment (see table 4-2). The follow-up inspection from the Local Authority in 2011 confirmed that changes to the timetable were made. Coral school's revised approach to curriculum design in response to the HMIE inspection report featured on the Scottish Government's website as an example of how CfE was having a positive impact in schools.



HMIE inspection had a very powerful influence over the timetabling decisions in other schools included in the study. The two extracts below illustrate how decisions over the allocation of curriculum time were influenced by the Local Authority's targets and the inspection process.

**Oliver- Emerald School:** ...we were inspected last year and although we got a very good report, it was highlighted that we are not providing two hours of PE for all [year groups in the school]. So, the Head Teacher without me going to see him....he came up to me and said that, this year [the first year of CfE], we are going to get three periods of PE, so now pupils are getting three 50 minute periods a week in first year. (Oliver interview 1, p. 4)

**Dawne- Amber School:** In third and fourth year core, we only have them once a week at the minute but with [CfE and the two hour target], there's no way they can avoid giving this twice a week with the new curriculum .... And we're also getting an inspection soon so that's another reason why (laughs) (Dawne interview 1, p. 22)

In summary, the findings established that inspection from HMIE and the Local Authority was a generative mechanism that could have an impact on the curriculum time available for physical education in schools.

#### **4.4.3 Health and wellbeing 'a responsibility of all' teachers**

A whole school approach for HWB as 'a responsibility of all' teachers to promote 'a healthy lifestyle' via daily physical activity did not feature in the Service Plan or Curriculum Architecture document (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 12; Terrane Local Authority, 2009a, 2009b). This is significant as it shaped the context for SBCD and reduced the likelihood of curriculum

leaders addressing specific experiences and outcomes for physical education. The 'Curriculum Architecture' document stated that HWB as 'a responsibility of all' would not be a focus in the 2010/11 session (Terrane Local Authority, 2009a). The Local Authority's priorities in the first year of CfE were literacy and numeracy.

At one level the decision not to focus on HWB had the effect of making curriculum leaders' roles more challenging and provided a barrier to SBCD. John and Dawne indicated that they were frustrated by the absence of guidance from Terrane and that the focus on 'numeracy and literacy' marginalised HWB as a 'responsibility of all' teachers:

**John - Topaz School:** And at the moment the health and wellbeing is lagging behind because [Terrane has] never once come out and said this is the [Terrane] Council Improvement Plan for every school in [Terrane] to drive forward. They have for literacy and they have for numeracy. So we're still waiting. (John Interview 2, p. 1)

**Dawne - Amber School:** I feel guilty about the science connection, but that hasn't happened yet...[or in the areas of] technologies and the health and wellbeing across learning. (Dawne Interview 2, p. 5)

Even though Terrane Local Authority had chosen to focus on literacy and numeracy, in her role as a QIO Susan noted that many headteachers were keen to address all of the areas outlined in CfE as 'a responsibility of all' teachers.

**Susan - Terrane QIO:** I would say the positive is .... the Health and wellbeing across learning audit, whether it [has] necessarily worked or not in all schools, it [has] still addressed it [HWB]. It [has] still got people thinking. .... even though it's [HWB] not a priority within

Terrane, it has raised the profile. So now head teachers have to think, “oh, it’s not just literacy and numeracy, oh, why’s Health and wellbeing important?” (Susan Interview 1, p. 20)

It was partly because HWB had a whole school focus that Susan was able to marshal support for authority-wide CPD events in HWB and physical education. The creation of the curriculum area of HWB and the Scottish Government’s decision to make HWB a ‘responsibility of all’ created an important space for teachers to operate within.

One of the statements in the HWB as ‘a responsibility of all’ section of CfE is: ‘I can expect my learning environment to support me to participate in a wide range of activities which promote a healthy lifestyle’ (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 12). A whole school strategy would be required to address this element of CfE, but the findings indicate that there was little in the way of strategic planning from senior management teams to take this forward.

There was a clear expectation set out in the experiences and outcomes for HWB that daily physical activity for all learners:

I am experiencing enjoyment and achievement on a *daily* basis by taking part in different kinds of *energetic physical activities* of my choosing, including sport and opportunities for outdoor learning, available at my place of learning and in the wider community HWB 3-25 (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 88) [emphasis added]

Curriculum leaders did not indicate that they were planning to focus on the promotion of daily physical activity. Dawne's comment in response to a question about the promotion of daily physical activity is particularly telling:

**Dawne –Amber School:** Well, I, I'm not sure I'd want to be measured on it because I'm not sure how much influence I have over it. (Dawne Interview 1, p. 65)

The absence of a strategic objective in the Service Plan for daily physical activity resulted in senior management teams considering the timetabling of two hours of physical education per week to be the priority. There was no requirement for schools to report formally how they were promoting physical activity to the Local Authority or HMIE (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a). The Service Plan strategic objective 4, 'Children and young people are physically and emotionally healthy', only required schools to provide, and monitor the impact of, two hours of physical education.

As a priority of the Scottish Government, and reinforced as a strategic objective of the Local Authority, the focus on the provision of weekly physical education obscured the promotion of daily physical activity as stated in CfE. When the study took place, there was no evidence of a whole school response in any of the schools, for the promotion of physical activity to address HWB as 'a responsibility of all'. However, there was a commitment from all of the curriculum leaders to ensure that activity time was maximised within physical education lessons. Oliver's statement below reflected the

views of the other curriculum leaders regarding their role in promoting physical activity as part of an overarching approach to fostering HWB.

**Oliver – Emerald School:** If they're doing that and they're enjoying themselves and they're taking part in the activity that they are going to continue in later life and they're getting their one hour of physical activity every day, and they have a knowledge of that, they're developing a knowledge of why they're doing that and how that benefits their health and it will help them in life, then I think we're doing our job. (Oliver Interview 1, p. 4)

It is important to note that Oliver's statement refers to pupils taking part in one hour of daily physical activity of their own volition. It was not something that featured in his plans when developing the curriculum.

The findings provide a nuanced account of how the presence and absence of; targets, guidance and time all shaped the context for SBCD. Senior management teams were influenced by guidance and targets as set out by the Scottish Government and Local Authority. This in turn had an impact on the context for SBCD and the scope curriculum leaders had in the design of the curriculum to address specific elements of CfE. However, chapters 5 and 6 reveal that across the nine schools, external issues related to accountability, attainment and the target for curriculum time did not account for all of the actions undertaken in SBCD.

#### **4.4.4 The Local Authority's influence**

The Service Plan for the Local Authority had an influence on the way that schools and teachers thought about the curriculum. In the interviews the curriculum leaders frequently made reference to 'personalisation and choice' which is one of the seven principles stated in 'Building the Curriculum 3' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 5).

**Dawne – Amber School:** ...in our school we give, breadth and personalisation and choice, maybe not necessarily in first year, but at some point during their junior stage they will have that. (Dawne Interview 2, p. 3)

**Katie – Sapphire School:** I guess there's elements of personalisation within lessons, but in terms of the choice of activity, not so much. And that's -- we're personalising learning for pupils more, (Katie Interview 2, p. 3)

**Barry – Opal School:** ...we try and give a bit of personalisation and choice as well (Barry Interview 1, p. 13)

At first it appeared that the references to, and an emphasis on ensuring, that the curriculum addressed 'personalisation and choice' were the result of curriculum leaders perceiving it as a 'new' principle of curriculum design. 'Personalisation and choice' represented a distinctive change and a departure from the curriculum design principles that shaped the development of the 5-14 curriculum. However, it became apparent that the curriculum leaders were being steered to focus on 'personalisation and choice' as it had featured as a specific section of Terrane's 'Curriculum Architecture' document.

The seven principles of curriculum design as stated by the Scottish Government (2008a) were included in the document but 'personalisation and choice' was the only principle singled out, with additional guidance provided for a school's senior management team and curriculum leaders. The Local Authority seemed to reassure those responsible for curriculum enactment that 'personalisation and choice' did not require each pupil to experience an individualised programme of learning by selecting specific courses of study. The advice was that in S1 'personalisation and choice' could be addressed by approaches to learning (Terrane Local Authority, 2009a). Terrane advocated pedagogy based on cooperative learning strategies.

The curriculum architecture document Terrane published reiterated the need to ensure that the curriculum affords opportunity for the development and recognition of the four capacities stated in CfE (successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors). Engaging in CfE and the CPD events organised by Terrane Local Authority led John to state that the process of SBCD had refreshed his department's approach to curriculum.

**John – Topaz School:** I think there's huge positives to be derived from [engaging with] CfE. There's a freshness. We can review our units. We can pull together departments [across the Local Authority]. So I'm actually really, really positive about it. (John Interview 1, p. 12)

There was a pre-existing professional learning network for teachers to build on and Terrane Local Authority provided a very valuable source of support for curriculum leaders as they embarked on the process of SBCD.

#### **4.4.5 Professional learning**

As part of Terrane Local Authority's Service Plan, Susan organised CPD events for HWB and physical education. It was striking how important these events had been in developing curriculum leaders' confidence to create the curriculum for their context<sup>12</sup>. The shared experience had been influential as it had provided practical guidance and support from fellow practitioners. Curriculum leaders already had an established schedule of three meetings over the school year. As a result of these meetings there was a history of working together. Susan indicated that curriculum leaders had met to discuss the draft HWB experiences and outcomes document. The group then submitted a collective response as part of the Scottish Government's consultation exercise for the development of CfE.

Susan's actions were clearly very influential in supporting teachers' professional learning. In her role within the Local Authority she was able to

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<sup>12</sup> Gary indicated his awareness of the events but as his school was not under local authority control he had not attended these events. He did note that he had been in contact with Dawne with whom he had a good professional relationship to ensure that he was aware of what was being developed and discussed.



set up and facilitate opportunities for professional reflection and dialogue. The events she organised had a direct impact on curriculum leaders. It was evident that supporting SBCD across the authority had become a collective effort, with teachers forming professional networks to create and share approaches to planning units of work. Curriculum leaders were aware that two other local authorities (Dalradian<sup>13</sup> and Moine) had produced detailed guidance on HWB to support teachers. These documents were circulated throughout the physical education community. Dawne, Sarah, Oliver and John made direct reference to them in their interviews, but it was clear that these documents did not have the same practical value as their attendance and participation in the CPD events. The two days provided an important source of professional support and acted as a catalyst to draw opportunities, resources and networks together. The way curriculum leaders talked about these events brought into focus how important the actions of the Local Authority had been in supporting curriculum development.

Susan saw her role as supporting the curriculum leaders and helping them to feel less anxious about the task they faced. The interview data from the nine curriculum leaders supported her perception that teachers were experiencing anxiety about their role in developing the curriculum. There was clear evidence that the two separate days in the lead up to the introduction of CfE helped curriculum leaders and other physical education teachers develop a

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<sup>13</sup> The two local authorities that created guidance and materials that curriculum leaders drew on are referred to as Dalradian and Moine.

shared understanding of how they might be able to approach developing curricula that would address the experiences and outcomes for HWB within physical education:

**James – Ruby School:** I think the way Terrane went about it last year was exceptional. We got together, every department was represented, mostly by two or three individuals to be honest and we set into different groups, working parties, sub-groups within that, and we trialled [units of work we created]. We didn't just write a course and say this is what we're going to do. We went away and trialled the experiences and outcomes in different ways, with different activities. (James Interview 1, p. 13)

There was a depth to the curriculum leaders' engagement in the process that went beyond reading documents and listening to presentations. James' comments provide an insight into how well received the events were by the eight curriculum leaders. The practical nature of the CPD was perceived to be particularly valuable because teachers across Terrane Local Authority shared their experiences after piloting the units of work.

John created a 'wiki'<sup>14</sup> for the physical education teachers within Terrane Local Authority as a way of sharing the examples of the pilots. This innovation helped teachers to review the materials at a later date with the possibility of downloading and editing the documents. The wiki was

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<sup>14</sup> The wiki as a shared editable web application allowed teachers within the authority to view all of the materials created. When the researcher accessed the wiki there had not been additional uploads following an initial period of activity after the CPD events. It appeared to have become a repository rather than a shared space where curriculum leaders uploaded the courses they developed later.

mentioned as a source of support for professional learning, but as Sarah noted her aspirations that the wiki would save her time were not realised.

**Sarah – Coral School:** I mean, I looked at quite a lot of it and thought, oh, I can't use that and yet the whole point was to try and not to make us have to reinvent the wheel and be duplicating work, but I still feel that we will end up doing [our own units.] (Sarah Interview 1, p. 3)

It was evident from the planning shown in the interviews that she and her department had created their own courses and units of work, (this is addressed in more detail in chapter 6). While Sarah's observations, and following comments from Emma about the wiki, made it clear that the process of sharing materials had been valuable, taking part in the day was more important:

**Emma – Jade School:** [John] fostered some of the approaches that he was showing that day. But yeah, they help; they definitely help [being able to access the wiki]. I prefer the conversations that you can have with each other; that sort of, "Oh, what are you doing?"; "Oh, go and show me that; what does that look like on paper?"; "What does it look like in a lesson?" And listen to what some people are doing. I mean, it's quite amazingly different to what ... but yeah, that for me has been really useful. (Emma Interview 2, p. 21)

There was strong evidence that the professional learning opportunities supported curriculum leaders' engagement with the process of curriculum development. Professional learning was not an isolated activity restricted to reading curriculum documentation. The CPD events arranged by Susan enabled curriculum leaders to engage in face-to-face conversations, observe practical examples and at a later date revisit units of work via a wiki.

When curriculum leaders were engaging in the process of curriculum development they sought reassurance that their planning would be acceptable to 'others'. The CPD events helped curriculum leaders develop their understanding of the process and they reported becoming more confident in their abilities to create a physical education curriculum aligned with the principles of CfE.

**Katie – Sapphire School:** Like I say, that's why the sharing of practice and experiences with other schools was beneficial, because you're sort of giving yourself a bit more confidence, say, well what we're doing is maybe along the right lines now because other schools are doing something very similar. But, then you're thinking, well why are we all doing this, why were we not given a clearer structure at the start? (Katie Interview 1, p. 23)

The doubts Katie expressed highlighted how professionally challenging engaging in curriculum development was for her. CfE was designed to allow teachers to exercise professional judgement and Katie's comments point up how the flexibility of the curriculum framework contrasted with curriculum leaders' desire for clear guidance. At the same time, Katie indicated the support provided by Terrane's CPD events helped to develop her confidence in her ability to undertake the task required to develop the curriculum in her school.

As chapter 5 will explore in more detail, curriculum leaders' engagement with national and local curriculum guidance texts and CPD events led to a

reinterpretation and reframing of CfE within their context. In the quotation below, taken from Barry's first interview, three important and related points emerge. Firstly, as already indicated, the CPD events provided reassurance and helped to reduce the concerns curriculum leaders had. Secondly, his comments about existing practice being consistent with the *text* of the experiences and outcomes for HWB is telling and this is evidence of CfE being reinterpreted by curriculum leaders. Finally, the CPD events provided opportunities to share approaches to curriculum design in physical education, but he did not seek directly to replicate in practice what was shared at the events and on the wiki. The CPD events were in his words 'the turning point', providing an important context for his professional learning:

**Barry – Opal School:** that took some of the fear and anxiety out of it, I think. Because they felt encouraged and thought, well actually that's stuff that I do. Okay, so rather than just have a football blog, we'll put the kids into teams and we'll create a table and we'll call it the African Cup of Nations and they'll all wear the colours of Egypt and that team will be the Cameroon and blady blady bla, which was stuff that we'd been doing for years and years. And I think that's where we came to a point where actually, we can go away and now write a course because we feel confident. That CPD was kind of the turning point, I felt. (Barry Interview 1, p. 10)

## 4.5 Summary

This chapter has identified that the operation and actions of the Local Authority had a significant impact on the way that school's senior management teams interpreted, and responded to, the regimes of *accountability* at Local Authority and national levels. Thus this study reveals

that curriculum change in physical education is not simply a matter for individual curriculum leaders or groups of teachers working together within a department. The task curriculum leaders were presented with of developing the physical education curriculum within the framework of CfE was patterned by the policy context. Drawing on policy documents relevant to CfE at national and Local Authority level, the findings presented in this chapter reveal the complex interplay between the policy context, regimes of *accountability* and the support available to curriculum leaders.

The CPD events were significant in that they appear to have provided a very important source of support for curriculum leaders as they engaged in SBCD. Both days provided an opportunity to share practice and the pilot work that had been undertaken within the authority. Curriculum leaders then sought to develop the curriculum within the context of their school. The findings that pertain to first order SBCD are the focus of the next chapter.



## **Chapter 5**

### **First Order Engagement: Curriculum Development**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a detailed examination of the processes of curriculum development revealed in the participants' accounts. SBCD for curriculum leaders involved two distinct but related processes. The distinction between first and second order SBCD related to the nature of the professional actions undertaken by curriculum leaders. First order SBCD encapsulates the professional learning that took place as curriculum leaders engaged with the 'big ideas' of CfE. Second order SBCD refers to the professional learning and action curriculum leaders reported engaging with as they actually designed curricula and created the content for 'blocks'<sup>15</sup>. It will become clear over the course of the next two chapters that the relationship between first and second order SBCD was not straightforward. This chapter is concerned with the findings related to first order SBCD, whilst the next chapter focuses on second order SBCD.

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<sup>15</sup> In the interviews curriculum leaders explained that the curriculum was organised into 'blocks' 'courses' or 'units'. These terms were used interchangeably to describe each school's formal documented plan for the learning outcomes, learning activities and approaches to assessment for a sequence of lessons. In this study 'blocks' is used to refer to the unit of time for an activity and the planning associated with it.

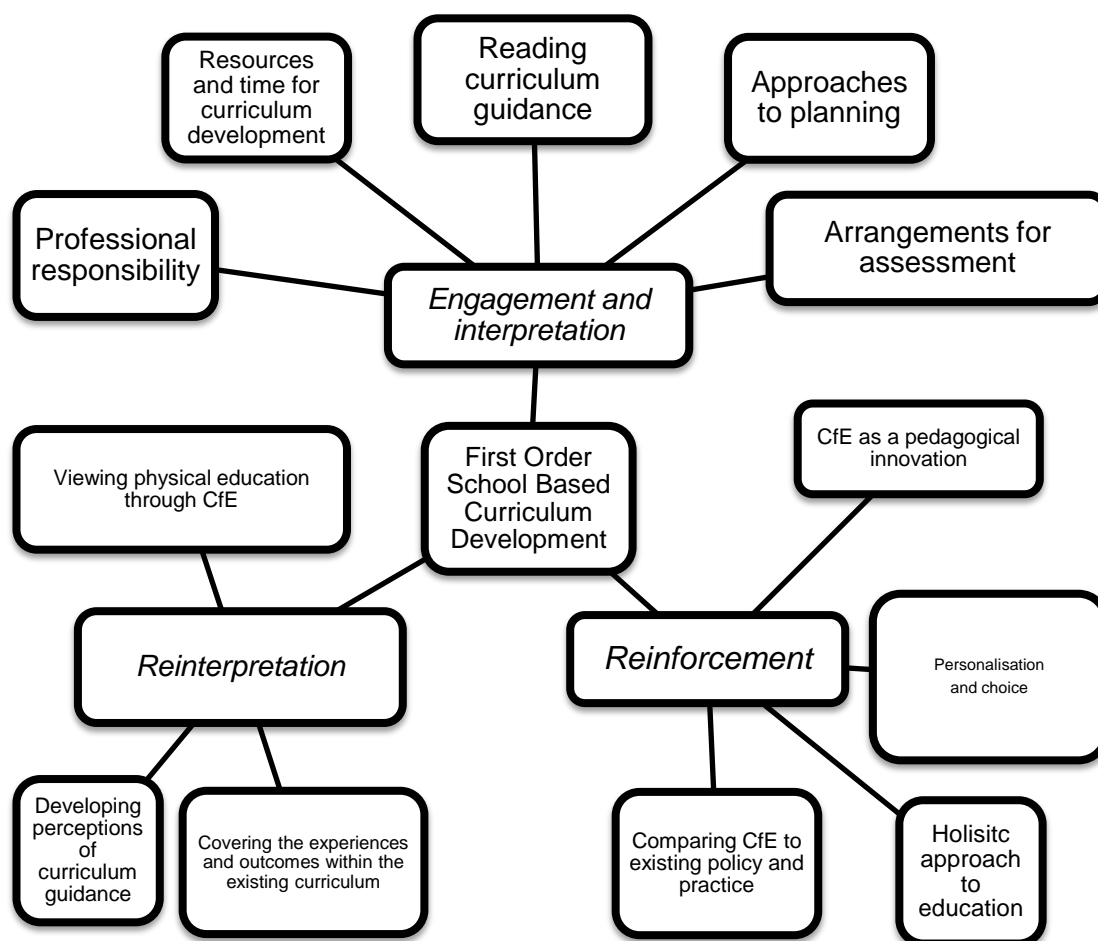


## 5.2 First Order School Based Curriculum Development

First order SBCD describes the professional learning and action of the nine senior management teams and curriculum leaders as they responded to national policy and the guidance issued by the Local Authority. The data gathered in the study gave an important insight into how the curriculum leaders read and engaged with the texts of CfE. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that first order SBCD had three important and linked phases. Figure 5-1 represents the three phases of first order SBCD; *engagement and interpretation, reinterpretation and reinforcement*.

In figure 5-1 five sub-elements are connected to 'engagement and interpretation' and the next section of this chapter centres on the findings underpinning that key element of first order SBCD. The chapter then focuses on how curriculum guidance led each of the curriculum leaders to a 'reinterpretation' of CfE. The section on 'reinforcement' draws on the four-sub elements represented in figure 5-1. These sub elements are: a holistic approach to education; comparing CfE to existing policy and practice; personalisation and choice; and CfE as a pedagogical innovation. The final section, points up the interplay between 'reinterpretation' and 'reinforcement'.

Taken as a whole, the chapter builds a nuanced account of first order SBCD.



**Figure 5-1 First order SBCD: Schools/ curriculum leaders' responses to policy discourses**

## 5.3 Engagement and interpretation

### 5.3.1 Professional responsibility

Analysis of the curriculum leaders' responses revealed that responding to curriculum change was professionally challenging. Engaging in the process of change required an awareness of broad policy issues coupled with the

ability to design curricula that would work within the context of their school. Curriculum leaders were expected to read national and local guidance created to support the introduction of CfE. As already indicated, the volume of documentation was considerable, requiring time to read and time to consider what it would mean in practice. The guidance available to curriculum leaders had been framed in such a way that it encouraged teachers' professional judgement about matters of curriculum design and enactment.

They were aware that their knowledge of CfE developed over time as they read documentation and attended CPD events. These professional learning activities were an important part of first order SBCD as they sought to understand what CfE would mean for physical education. As a result of their engagement in professional learning activities and their interpretation of national and local guidance, curriculum leaders reported a growing appreciation and acceptance of their role in the development of the curriculum.

Curriculum leaders felt they *had* to engage with policy documents and keep abreast of developments in order to develop the curriculum in a way that would meet the expectations of HMIE, the Local Authority and their senior management team.

**Alex – Garnet School:** You know gradually, tomorrow for example, we'll find out probably a little bit more about Curriculum for Excellence than we did, we knew yesterday. Do you know what I mean? And every day you kind of glean a little bit more and it's becoming clearer or it's becoming more hazy. (Alex Pilot Interview 1, p. 1)

Thirteen months before the introduction of CfE, in a pilot interview, Alex provided this insight which also reflected comments other curriculum leaders made about the challenges of engaging in SBCD. The process of change was challenging and non-linear. New information provided by anyone within the school, Local Authority, Learning and Teaching Scotland, HMIE or Scottish Government could result in teachers' previous thinking being challenged or reinforced.

In the following quotation, Oliver comments on how he has grown in confidence as a result of his engagement in professional learning activities related to first order SBCD. His comments indicate a shift in focus away from macro concerns of accountability towards what would take place in lessons with pupils as his department considered the changes required to respond to CfE.

**Oliver – Emerald School:** I like it, and I think I'm quite confident with where we are at the moment. I said confident like I wasn't!

**Andrew:** I noticed that!

**Oliver:** No, I am. I'm more confident than I was a couple of years ago, in terms of the experiences for the kids. And I think the thing that I was trying to say at the department [meeting] was, it's about this being explicit with the kids. Because what do they know about Curriculum for Excellence? You know, not very much. Yet they can talk and talk and

talk about what happens to them when they're in classes, so it's about trying to be a wee bit more open with them, and get them...and we've worked really hard on things like...and I know it seems a simple thing, but it's so important, isn't it, is like, our learning intentions in our plenaries, and our questioning. That's something that, as a department, we've really focused on this year. (Oliver Interview 1, p. 4)

The findings indicate that 'active interpretation' of CfE led to a 'reinterpretation' of the actions required of teachers and a 'reinforcement' that their departments had the pedagogical skills to teach lessons consistent with the 'philosophy' of CfE. Previous research has indicated that teachers can be resistant and strategic in their responses to changes in externally developed curricula. But analysing what the curriculum leaders said, how they said it and what they intended to plan in response to CfE made it difficult to characterise any of their responses to curriculum change as resistant or surface level strategic compliance with policy.

### **5.3.2 Resources and time for curriculum development**

The curriculum leaders felt that the resources and time available for professional learning was a constraining factor on what they could plan and enact. As noted in the previous chapter, SBCD required time. Susan was distinctly aware that curriculum leaders required support given the timeframes for development. The time curriculum leaders were devoting to learning about CfE was considerable and the shifting and evolving nature of the guidance on CfE presented them with a challenge.

Susan's rather scathing comments about the resources available to the 4,000 teachers across the primary and secondary sector in Terrane Local Authority indicate how little money was available to support the 'implementation' of SBCD (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b).

**Susan - Terrane QIO:** There was an extra day for Curriculum for Excellence. There was also, last year there was, and I could be wrong with the figures, but there was about £200,000 given to each Local Authority ...for implementation of Curriculum for Excellence, which is nothing. (Susan Interview 1, p. 18)

How the £200,000 had been allocated to support teachers was unclear, but curriculum leaders did not report additional funding being made available to support SBCD.

They related that the only externally provided additional resource they had to assist them with the process of SBCD were additional Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days. There are normally five in-service days for teachers each academic year as part of the arrangements for professional learning and development (Scottish Government, 2009c). There have been six extra CPD days (3 up to 2009, 1 in 2010 and 2 in 12/13 for secondary schools only) (Kidner, 2013). After pressure from teachers' groups the Scottish Government sanctioned an additional in-service day in 2010 to allow teachers more time to prepare for the introduction of CfE. This extra

day was on top of the £17.8 million the Scottish Government reported providing to Local Authorities for the purpose of preparing for CfE between 2005-2008, and the £4 million funding for 100 extra teachers (Scottish Government, 2009b). Beyond the provision of extra in-service time the curriculum leaders appeared to be unaware of how the Local Authority was deploying these resources and questioned if six days of CDP provided sufficient time for staff development, given the scale of the task they were facing.

Sarah reflected on the contrast between what was taking place now and the support provided for the introduction of Standard Grade courses in the 1980s. These courses focused on S3-S4 were phased in over a six-year period after the publication of the Munn and Dunning reports in 1977:

**Sarah – Coral School:** ...there was a huge change in the curriculum with Munn and Dunning. There was a long, long staff development build up to that, with a lot of support nationally and locally. I feel there's not been the same and this is a far bigger change. (Sarah Interview 1, p. 2)

All teachers in Scotland have a 'contractual requirement to complete a maximum of 35 hours of CPD per annum' (Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers, 2014, np). In interviews, the curriculum leaders made it clear that they had exceeded the maximum of 35 hours and committed significant

amounts of their own time beyond the school day, to prepare materials and engage in professional development.

Curriculum change had a profound impact on the curriculum leaders' workload.

**James – Ruby School:** The 35 hours is probably done in the summer holidays alone. (James Interview 2, p. 13)

**Dawne – Amber School:** ...it's [curriculum development] a heck of a lot of work. I mean, honestly, it's just ridiculous the kinda workload just now. (Dawne Interview 1, p. 60)

The extent of change across the nine schools varied, but this was not related to any deliberate or strategic attempt to resist engaging in SBCD. In the interviews, all curriculum leaders reported reading CfE and other associated documentation from Learning and Teaching Scotland, HMIE and the Local Authority. In each interview it was evident they were knowledgeable about CfE, and professionally engaged with the discourse of curriculum change. For them, CfE represented a significant development and one which had an impact throughout the schools they were working in. Curriculum leaders' accounts provide an important insight into how their initial reading of CfE was patterned by previous experiences, their current context and expectations of future developments. As curriculum leaders sought to learn more about CfE they were envisioning what developments in S1 would mean for National Qualifications.



### 5.3.3 Reading curriculum guidance

The following extract reveals how Emma interpreted CfE within the context of existing qualifications in physical education:

**Emma – Jade School:** [Well] looking at the, the experiences and outcomes themselves. You know if we are asking pupils to evaluate and appreciate. If I asked an S1 pupil ‘can you tell me what evaluate means or appreciate means’ and ...

**Andrew:** I asked you a question about what’s your view about the experiences and outcomes. Do you see a relationship between the experiences and outcomes and intermediate one and intermediate two or any other?

**Emma:** Yes.

**Andrew:** In what way?

**Emma:** In the way that they were worded. In ...the language that they use and in what the outcome should be.

**Andrew:** Right so are you using your knowledge of teaching Int one, Int two to develop Curriculum for Excellence?

**Emma:** Yeah, to an extent, yeah. I think that’s the way PE’s going. You know, in terms of where there was, it was very teacher led, you know. In Standard Grade it is very, this is a written rule, this is an unwritten rule. It’s about them [pupils] and it’s about their performance. And I find that even in S1, where they’ve maybe not [been] as self-aware, they like talking about themselves and what they’ve done. And so, yeah, I suppose, yeah, when that’s very much the model. And at Int one, Int two and Higher level then, yeah, I’m absolutely transferring that. (Emma Interview 1, p. 11/12)

Emma was actively interpreting the experiences and outcomes, viewing the language of CfE to be consistent with the terminology of current qualifications. Existing qualifications and curriculum models in physical

education patterned her approach to the experiences and outcomes with the intention of preparing pupils for future courses.

Emma's perspective was consistent with other curriculum leaders' 'engagement and interpretation' of CfE. It may appear that Emma had transposed her existing frames of reference for National Qualifications onto CfE and this could be judged to be a simplistic approach on her part. However, it is important to point up the considerable amount of work curriculum leaders were doing to engage with, and actively interpret, the form and content of CfE. They reported that CfE required a different approach to the curriculum, changing their role and the way they and their colleagues thought about teaching. In the extract from Emma's interview she made a statement that 'it's about them and it's about their performance', which followed the preceding point about lessons being 'teacher led'. Emma's interpretation was that CfE shifted the focus towards 'pupil led' learning and increased the responsibility that pupils would need to take in lessons. This point is taken up again in the Discussion chapter when analysing curriculum leaders' perceptions of the pedagogical implications of developing a curriculum that addressed CfE.

Significantly, curriculum leaders valued the freedom and autonomy they had to create the curriculum, but at the same time reported concerns that there was too much flexibility and not sufficient guidance to inform their planning.

As following paragraphs will reveal, CfE was perceived to be a flexible curriculum framework, open to interpretation and 'vague'. The Scottish Government's (2009b) position was that the guidance for planning the curriculum for each area of CfE was contained within the 'Experiences and Outcomes'. However, curriculum leaders perceived the 'Experiences and Outcomes' to be 'vague' and problematic precisely because they were open to interpretation.

Oliver provided an insight into how the professional autonomy afforded to teachers presented him with a challenge as he planned his S1 curriculum. He wanted to ensure that there was 'continuity', 'progression' and 'challenge' as pupils made the transition from numerous feeder primary schools to Emerald school (Scottish Government, 2008a). As CfE did not require 'coverage' of any specific activity area, ensuring continuity and progression was difficult without direct engagement with all of the feeder primary schools. This was because CfE contained no prescriptive guidance on the content of the physical education curriculum beyond the guidance that the experiences and outcomes should be addressed. Accordingly, each school and teacher could plan to use different activity areas for the purpose of achieving the same 'experience and outcome'.

**Oliver – Emerald School:** I'm going to have kids coming up from five different [primary] schools with totally different experiences, because they [Experiences & Outcomes] are so vague, ... the outcomes and experiences can be interpreted in so many different ways. What one school interprets as [pupils] having achieved that outcome could be

very different from one of my other cluster [primary schools'] views of what it means to achieve that outcome. You've got kids coming into first year that could have totally different experiences. But, I think what really needs to happen is we need to get together and have a bit [of a ] consensus of saying, this is what we will develop through primary seven, so by the end of primary seven [pupils will all have had] a similar experience. (Oliver Interview 1, p. 18)

Oliver highlights, as did other curriculum leaders, a common perception that developing a shared understanding of CfE required time to engage in active interpretation of the documentation and opportunities for professional learning. He mentioned his desire to reach a shared understanding between teachers of how to plan and provide experiences across the cluster<sup>16</sup> of feeder primary schools for Emerald School. The findings of this study revealed that curriculum leaders were seeking to develop a shared understanding of what CfE would mean for their practice within each department, school, cluster and Local Authority.

Oliver's comments reveal his and other curriculum leaders' disquiet about the 'vagueness' of the experiences and outcomes within CfE. Curriculum leaders experienced difficulties in engaging with the policy documents and texts related to CfE because they all required 'active interpretation' to discern what might be appropriate professional actions to enact the curriculum. Their

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<sup>16</sup> Within Terrane Local Authority there are networks of schools which curriculum leaders referred to as clusters or neighbourhoods. Each of the secondary schools had a cluster of feeder primary schools and each of the secondary schools have been grouped geographically to form neighbourhoods. In this study any grouping within the local authority is referred to as a cluster with the designated age range stated (e.g. a cluster of primary schools, a cluster of secondary schools).

expectations were that policy texts would provide clear parameters and guidance for planning. They reported that when they engaged in the Local Authority CPD sessions they came to related but different interpretations of the same documentation. This led them to question their interpretation of documentation and they raised concerns in interviews that the guidance was not clear enough to reach a shared understanding of what was expected of them to develop the curriculum in their school. Emma's comments revealed her sense of the challenges of first order engagement.

**Emma – Jade School:** I think that ... people are looking at their methodologies and trying to be consistent. And this is where I think there's kind of a grey area. .... with CfE there's a bit more of flexibility in terms of how we can approach things. And people keep saying there's no right or wrong at the moment which is okay, we can accept that. I don't think we need to become clones of each other but I do think it's important that, you know, people are given autonomy. And I think that's obviously a massive thing at the moment. There's very much a kind of almost do what you like mentality, which I agree with to an extent. But I think there's also got to be a formalised consistent approach with it. [So that pupils] get relatively the same experience. (Emma Interview 1, p. 2)

While she valued the autonomy she had to create the curriculum, she was sceptical that there was not a 'wrong' way to approach SBCD within physical education. At the end of the statement what comes through very strongly is that she is concerned that pupils' learning experiences should be similar. This was related to her views about equality of opportunity and her worry that there were no guidelines for the 'activity areas' that comprised physical education. Curriculum leaders found that addressing the CfE curriculum design principles of breadth, depth, coherence and progression was made

more problematic by the fact that there were no touchstones for the physical education curriculum.

### **5.3.4 Curriculum leaders' approaches to planning**

Across the nine schools, there were a range of approaches, with some reporting a collegiate approach to planning and development which helped to promote an active form of engagement from all of the staff in the department. Katie explained that as a department they had all sat down over a series of meetings to consider how to respond to CfE:

**Katie – Sapphire School:** I guess probably we mainly used the big folder with outcomes and experiences and knowledge based on the reading that had already occurred .... We decided it would be appropriate to have two activities where we put a focus on co-operating and competing and two activities where we put a focus on evaluating and appreciating, and really across all activities there would be a focus on movement skills competencies. That was our initial plan. (Katie Interview 2, p. 2)

Oliver also sought to engage the four other members of the department in the process, as he planned to develop units for 12 activities for the S1 curriculum:

**Oliver – Emerald School:** I got the department to make up...we picked three activities each, because I didn't want me to do it all, because I thought it's going to be repetitive and it's going to be the same kind of things, whereas I was wanting to get other people's ideas. (Oliver Interview 2, p. 14)

In other schools, pressures of time and staffing led to other approaches to planning and mapping out the curriculum. James at Ruby school indicated that, as he was new into post and as planning needed to be in place for the start of the school year, he had created the curriculum on his own. James had been very involved in the pilot work that had taken place within the Local Authority and this had helped to develop his confidence that he could create the curriculum for Ruby school.

**James – Ruby School:** All the documents and the knowledge base and the knowledge of the experience and outcomes and what underpins good teaching and learning within these outcomes, that was done as the whole council approach. By the time I'd come here, I knew what I needed to impact, what I needed to change. Did a lot of it over the summer holidays and presented it to the staff. (James Interview 2, p. 2)

James' view was that 'good teaching and learning' stemmed from knowledge of the experiences and outcomes as set out in CfE. In this extract he is articulating a level of confidence that, as we have seen, was not shared by all of the curriculum leaders. The source of his confident approach to curriculum design and planning had been the active role he played in the Local Authority CPD events. James was in effect endorsing the interpretation of CfE that he and his working group had developed when presenting to colleagues at the Terrane Local Authority CPD events.

At one level, curriculum leaders' engagement was linked to the role they held in the school. Curriculum leaders were attending meetings within the school

and Terrance Local Authority where they would be expected to discuss curriculum developments related to CfE. However, what is evident is that their engagement in the process went beyond strategic compliance or an attempt to present themselves as competent in meetings.

There was clear evidence that all of the curriculum leaders were spending a considerable amount of time engaged in professional learning activities. In addition to the CPD events described in Chapter 4 they reported reading the materials produced by other Local Authorities<sup>17</sup>. Two Local Authorities had created specific guidance for the curriculum area of HWB. During the Terrane Local Authority CPD events content and approach to planning for HWB set out in these documents had been discussed.

**Dawne – Amber School:** But it's quite, it's good that somebody's ahead of the game because, at least, you're not gonna adopt it necessarily, but you see a structure there and you can then pick off what you want and what you don't want. So we've all looked at [Dalradian authority's document] and that's been really useful, very helpful. So I, I don't see this [as] hugely different from 5-14 because we, it was the same kind of "We don't know what we're doing, there's no, what does that level mean, blah, blah, blah, what does that..?" you know. (Dawne Interview 1, p. 53)

**Sarah – Coral School:** You could be doing your own thing and it could be totally the wrong thing, do you know what I mean. God knows what other people are doing. It's blatantly obvious that different councils are ...like Dalradian, we snaffled all their materials (Sarah Interview 1, p. 18)

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<sup>17</sup> Curriculum leaders reported obtaining the documents that other local authorities had created via informal professional networks.



The materials produced by the local authorities of Dalradian and Moine included what teachers referred to as a 'matrix'; and this approach where the experiences and outcomes were mapped against the existing curriculum was a feature of all of the curriculum leaders' approaches to planning. The table below provides an indication of how the audit that Oliver conducted led him to map out where the experiences and outcomes would be addressed as he planned the design of the curriculum at Emerald school.

**Table 5-1 Emerald School - Experiences and outcomes mapped against activities**

Experiences and Outcome Codes	S1	S2	S3
HWB 2-21a/ 3-21a	Athletics, Basketball , Gymnastics	Athletics, Basketball, Gymnastics	-
HWB 2-22a/ 3-22a	Badminton, Football , Swimming	-	-
HWB 4-21a	-	Athletics, Basketball, Gymnastics	Athletics
HWB 4-22a	-	Badminton, Football, Swimming	Skill Development Choice
HWB 3-23a	Football, Games- Making, Hockey/Rugby	-	-
HWB 4-23a	-	Football, Games- Making, Hockey/Rugby	Athletics, Personal Choice
HWB 3-24a	Badminton, Gymnastics	-	-

HWB 4-24a	-	Badminton, Gymnastics	Skill Development Choice
HWB 2-25a/ 3-25a	ALL ACTIVITIES (Over-Arching)		
HWB 4-25a	-	-	Fitness Development Choice  Personal Choice
HWB 2-26a/ 3-26a	All Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport Block		
HWB 4-26a			
HWB 2-27a/ 3-27a	Fitness	Fitness	-
HWB 3-28a	Fitness	Fitness	-
HWB 4-28a	-	-	Fitness Development Choice

Mapping experiences and outcomes against activity areas was only part of the design process. Curriculum leaders used the planning tools created by Dalradian and Moine to 'audit' all aspects of CfE. Section 5.4 provides more detail of this process. There was no comparable planning tool created by Terrane Local Authority but the 'Curriculum Architecture' document contained guidance to 'audit' the existing curriculum against the 'four capacities', which in effect gave a steer to engage in a review of existing curricula and practice.

### 5.3.5 Arrangements for assessment in CfE

The way curriculum leaders talked about the curriculum not only revealed their interpretation of the guidance documents but also how strongly their approach to SBCD was influenced by attainment and accountability. In the extract presented on page 162 Oliver referred to 'Outcomes and Experiences' rather than 'Experiences and Outcomes' as presented in CfE. He was not alone in making this reversal, Katie, Oliver, James, Dawne and Emma all referred to 'Outcomes and Experiences' as they talked about CfE. This reversal was reflective of teachers' concerns about 'delivering' the curriculum and making sure that they had in place a way of assessing, recording and reporting what the outcomes were:

**Katie – Sapphire School:** There's a list of what focus outcomes and experiences we have for each activity. And then for each activity there is a block outline and also the kind of success criteria for that activity. (Katie Interview 2, p. 11)

The focus on the outcomes and the success criteria for each activity had clearly taken Katie and her colleagues a lot of time to create and develop, reinforcing the point about the increased workload curriculum leaders experienced. They were putting measures in place to ensure that they had evidence to support assessment judgements that pupils had 'met' outcomes. This was partly because they wanted to develop internal approaches to assure the quality of pupils' experiences but it mainly reflected their desire to

ensure that they were prepared for external inspection and had evidence of attainment.

All interviewees highlighted what they perceived to be inadequacies with curriculum guidance. They wanted more information about the arrangements for assessment. Dawne and John expressed dissatisfaction that their and other teachers' time had been 'wasted' because there was not more detailed guidance on assessment provided by Learning and Teaching Scotland, HMIE or Local Authorities. Curriculum leaders recounted time-consuming meetings and ongoing professional dialogue as they sought to establish clarity about expectations for assessment before embarking on curriculum development.

**Dawne –Amber School:** It's a bit frustrating at times I suppose, because... it's just the fact...yeah, we're all reinventing the wheel together at the same time all over the place and that's frustrating, yeah. I'm sure we could have structured it a bit better. But, no, it's very ... I mean, apart from being totally exhausting, it's really ... it is very stimulating .... there's nothing been more meaningful in my 34 years of teaching. This is definitely on the right lines, and it is very meaningful and I'm sure it will make a difference. It's much more enjoyable to deliver. (Dawne Interview 2, p. 25-26)

**John – Topaz School:** ...we're in this, this transition period, this period of grey murky waters, nothing's there. It's a holistic approach. [Curriculum development is] to be from the bottom up. We still don't know what [the content will be for National Qualifications at SCQF] four and five will be....from a personal opinion I would have been ... a lot happier [being] given guidance by [Terrane] say or by the cluster. As opposed to three teachers off their own back creating a short life working group, pulling all PE teachers together. And then running something. (John Interview 1, p. 2)

These two extracts reveal the layered nature of engagement in the process of SBCD. John's reference to 'murky waters' provides an insight into how he evaluated the guidance he had to work from as he developed the curriculum, the present was uncertain in relation to CfE and the future of National Qualifications was unknown.

'Nothing's there' in John's statement provides an insight into his frustration at the 'writerly' nature of CfE (Barthes, 1977). He has to create a physical education curriculum without, in his eyes, adequate guidance on important matters such as assessment. His judgement was that there was 'nothing' to work from; CfE was so vague that it did not provide the basis for planning courses in physical education that would prepare pupils for the senior phase when they would be expected to attain National Qualifications.

The open nature of CfE was something all of the curriculum leaders referred to. However, not all of the curriculum leaders expressed as strong a view as John. His focus on issues of assessment was aligned with his desire to ensure that attainment levels remained high in his department and across the school. Katie also made it clear that, in her view, matters of assessment were occupying teachers' thoughts and shaping the way they approached CfE.

**Katie – Sapphire School:** One of the main challenges I guess has been what, [I have been engaged in for] another hour and a half discussion about this afternoon, which is assessment. I just feel that [it has] become a massive challenge, and I think it's defeating the purpose of the Curriculum for Excellence. Once again [I have been]

engaged in this massive discussion about how we're going to assess in S1. What this looks like? What that looks like? What terminology we're looking at? What we're assessing? What's the weighting of this? What's the weighting of that? Do we assess -- ? And I just feel we're overloading ourselves -- I'm talking more about assessment in S1 than I ever have [when compared to] assessment at higher, intermediate level and standard grade level. And I do feel that that's -- I don't know if it's just an issue within PE, but I feel it's a bit of a problem. Because I think the whole purpose of the Curriculum for Excellence was to move away from [assessment] until [the senior phase] S4-S6 and actually it's all about the child's experience and taking the child on this journey where this is -- yes, they have to have an understanding of where they are and the next steps and where you want to get them to, but it's just not going that way. It's going the exact opposite, that's my feeling. (Katie Interview 2, p. 6)

In CfE, the 'experiences and outcomes' provided a framework within which teachers should create the curriculum, but they had to interpret and engage actively with the curriculum documents to develop courses. Dawne was aware that CfE was not intended to impose a curriculum on schools and that for SBCD to take place teachers needed to engage in dialogue. John's statement also reflects an appreciation that CfE was intended to be developed from the 'bottom up', but he and Dawne still sought external support and guidance. Dawne's powerful statement that the process, although distinctly demanding, had been very stimulating and that 'there's nothing been more meaningful' provides an indication of how her engagement in the process of SBCD had developed a positive perception of CfE. The other curriculum leaders were equally engaged in the process of SBCD and expressed their views that CfE had acted as a catalyst for thinking about how to create a more connected experience for pupils. The strong theme running through each interview was that SBCD required time, and

curriculum leaders were frustrated that a lot of the time they committed had been taken up with trying to second guess what would be judged by external stakeholders to be adequate approaches to the assessment of experiences and outcomes.

## 5.4 Reinterpretation

### 5.4.1 Viewing physical education through CfE

The interviews provided a rich source of evidence that active interpretation took place at two levels, firstly the texts were open to interpretation, but more than this curriculum leaders were reading the 'new' developments in a context patterned by previous and existing policy. For curriculum leaders part of the meaning making process that took place within 'engagement and interpretation' was trying to see what 'new' policies said or would mean for existing practices. These two levels of 'interpretation' preceded a process of 'reinterpretation' of CfE for each of the curriculum leaders.

**Barry – Opal School:** I think fundamentally PE will be the same in terms of the activities offered, the things that you would *cover* in the activities would all be the same. I think the changes come in the *delivery* and the changes come in the *assessment* of it. (Barry Interview 1, p. 9) [emphasis added]

**John- Topaz School:** I personally actually read every one of them [a reference to the five documents published], so Building the Curriculum [one], all the way through to Building the Curriculum [five], and the 'Bible' that was handed out in alphabetical order, so some schools got it before others, which is a big huge weighty document. Also [when] the experiences and outcomes came [in draft form] ... we actually went through every one of them in an audit format. So we did a matrix, so I did a matrix like this at Malachite School and so we broke this down and it was really ... tricky, conversations that we had [in the

department] because we had our existing unit plans on one hand and we had the experiences and outcomes in the other. And we said right, which naturally matches up with, also ... we have the opportunity here to change things. So if you wanted to look at changing something now's the time to trial it. So that's what I did and shared that with Terrane [Local Authority] as well. (John Interview 2, p. 3)

These two extracts point to how curriculum leaders' engagement and interpretation led to a *reinterpretation* of CfE. Barry indicated that although physical education is now within HWB he planned on making no changes to the existing practical activities of the curriculum. CfE represented a different approach to teaching and learning, requiring him to adopt new arrangements for reporting and assessment imposed by Terrane Local Authority. John's statement helps to exemplify how his use of auditing matrices focused on seeking 'natural' matches between CfE and the existing curriculum. In this approach to mapping the pre-existing curriculum against CfE, curriculum leaders exercised their professional judgements to determine if the specified 'experiences and outcomes' within HWB could be 'covered' by the existing curriculum.

John's reference to the folder containing all of the experiences and outcomes as the 'Bible' was indicative of the status this set of texts held for curriculum leaders. Curriculum leaders' 'active interpretation' of national and local curriculum guidance documents led to the development of a view that the 'experiences and outcomes' of CfE were to be covered in the curriculum they designed for S1. The reference to 'a matrix' indicated that curriculum leaders



approached planning by auditing existing practice. The teachers' professional judgement appeared to reflect their interpretation that 'covering' the experiences and outcomes would be required, firstly to ensure they were 'meeting' the needs of children and secondly to provide a defence mechanism for the purposes of inspection. They were seeking to ensure they would not be exposing themselves to the obvious criticism from key stakeholders (the senior management team, Terrane Local Authority and HMIE) that experiences and outcomes were not part of their curriculum. Therefore, concerns and uncertainty about the inspection process elevated the importance of ensuring the shield of 'coverage' was in place to protect them.

The potential for creating a curriculum from first principles was in practice reduced to teachers pragmatically seeking to check if what was currently taking place in their school would address or could be 'matched up' with the experiences and outcomes.

**Sarah – Coral School:** We did this, we went through this whole process of, and we did it as part of the working groups, where you completed this thing called a matrix and you had all the experiences and outcomes and you had your activities going right across the top. I've got copies of it although I didn't photocopy it for you, we sat ticking the boxes off. We could hit that [experience and outcome] in that activity, we could hit it there, that [physical activity or sport] lends itself to that one. Literacy and numeracy obviously we did the same thing, ticking the boxes. (Sarah Interview 1, p. 8)

The practice of 'auditing' was common to all of the case study schools where the teachers in the department and in many cases at a whole school level considered how closely their existing practice matched the expectations of CfE. This provided an account of practice that differed from the official discourse that schools and teachers were to engage in SBCD considering from first principles how best to address the experiences and outcomes for each curriculum area (Scottish Government, 2008a). This 'how to' or 'first principles' approach to developing CfE was replaced with a 'what we are already doing' approach. Curriculum leaders reported that auditing reflected the requirements to provide an account of what was taking place in the school. Auditing as part of a process of self-evaluation was the way that Local Authorities and schools prepared for external inspections.

Terrane's guidance for CfE advocated that in each school all staff in each subject should 'undertake an audit against the 4 capacities' (Terrane Local Authority, 2009a, p. 7). In addition, the senior management team with the support of teachers should map where in the school curriculum there were 'opportunities for achievement', 'personalisation and choice', and 'interdisciplinary learning'. A further three audits to ascertain the coverage of 'Literacy', 'Numeracy' and 'HWB' across learning were also required. The intention of Terrane Local Authority appears to have been to ensure that each school created a shared vision for its approach to CfE (Terrane Local Authority, 2009a). While auditing and mapping were intended to be the

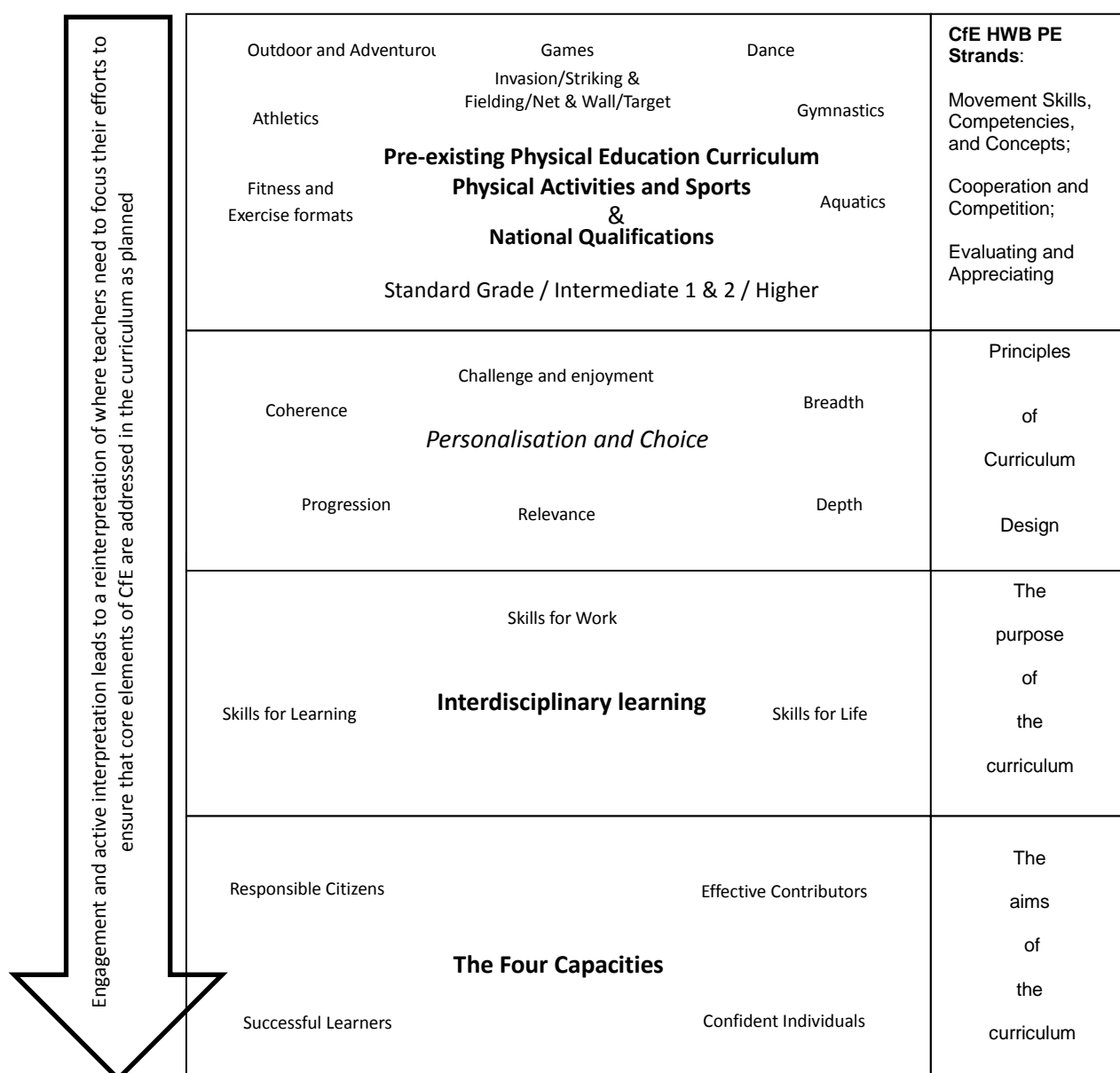
starting point and a catalyst for SBCD, what appears to have taken place in physical education was a reinterpretation of how the subject could address the broad framework of CfE and the experiences and outcomes in HWB. The 'Excellence Group for HWB' had aspirations for transformational change in physical education as a result of its location and positioning within the newly formed area of HWB (Scottish Government, 2011b). However, the processes at work within first order SBCD led to a 'reinforcement' of existing curricula and pedagogical approaches. These findings provide an important insight into how curriculum leaders' engagement with national and local guidance created a nuanced *reinterpretation* of how to *transform* physical education through their pedagogical approaches.

## **5.5 Reinforcement**

### **5.5.1 CfE perceived as a *pedagogical* innovation**

Figure 5-2 provides a representation of the process curriculum leaders went through, as they considered the pre-existing physical education curriculum against the new language and discourse of CfE. Curriculum leaders'

perceptions of CfE revealed they viewed CfE primarily as a pedagogical



**Figure 5-2 A representation of how CfE guidance patterned teachers' responses to SBCD innovation. Their view was that CfE was more about an approach to teaching.**

They emphasised that CfE was about a more holistic approach to education and the development of the four capacities. This and the next section outline

how curriculum leaders' engagement with, and interpretation of, national and local curriculum guidance led to a *reinterpretation* of where they needed to focus their efforts. Their focus was on ensuring the new curriculum for S1 addressed the 'principles of curriculum design', the 'purpose of the curriculum' and 'the four capacities'.

Figure 5-2 represents the process teachers went through in first order SBCD as they engaged with curriculum guidance. In each school existing physical education curricula were compared to the three strands of physical education presented in CfE. These strands of 'movement skills, competencies, and concepts'; 'cooperation and competition' and 'evaluating and appreciating' did not specify that the physical education curriculum contained or covered specific physical activities (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 84). Teachers had the freedom to decide how to plan learning experiences for pupils to achieve the outcomes specified. Earlier sections of this chapter have reported that curriculum leaders had some difficulties in interpreting the language of the experiences and outcomes but overall curriculum leaders considered the three strands to be aligned with existing practice. This was because in the audits they conducted curriculum leaders could map the experiences and outcomes onto the existing curriculum and physical activities thereby reinforcing their current approach and negating the need to transform the curriculum and orientate physical education to promote HWB.

As table 5-2 indicates the HWB curriculum area included a number of elements that teachers of physical education were expected to address.

**Table 5-2 Elements of the HWB curriculum area within CfE**

<u>Food and health</u>
Nutrition
Safe and hygienic practices
Food and the consumer
<u>Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing</u>
Mental and emotional wellbeing
Social wellbeing
Physical wellbeing
<u>Physical education, physical activity and sport</u>
Physical education
Physical activity and sport
Physical activity and health
<u>Planning for choices and changes</u>
Relationships, sexual health and parenthood
Substance misuse

The interviews indicated that their main focus was on 'Physical education, physical activity and sport'. The teachers referred to other elements of the HWB area, but it was clear that through a process of reinterpretation their core concerns were with the experiences and outcomes contained in the three strands of 'physical education' within HWB. The other elements of HWB such as 'Food Health' would be the core focus for teachers of Home Economics, and the experiences and outcomes for 'Planning for Choices and Change' were likely to form part of the planning for lessons with a focus on

personal and social education. Thus, although there were opportunities for 'interdisciplinary' learning and teachers were aware that links across curriculum areas could be made, other factors such as time and the organisation of the school day made these problematic.

In the following comments Oliver related how he and his department had approached reading the experiences and outcomes with the intention of identifying 'interdisciplinary' learning opportunities outside the 'Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport' section of HWB.

**Oliver – Emerald School:** The only benefit of doing something like that would be to identify cross curricular things, like interdisciplinary things, and have time to do that. So, could we sit with Home Economics, and with science and say, well we'll do something about the human body, we'll do something about heart and lungs, could we link that into science when we're doing something about nutrition and how interesting nutritional effects of what happens when you exercise. We could link in and do that. We have very little time to do that, and these are things which sort of come in, which haven't been planned at the start of the year, but said, oh, we could do this together.

**Andrew:** *And, that's starting to happen later.*

**Oliver:** It started to happen later, but then you're taking away what you've originally planned for your class, taking time out to do these interdisciplinary things, and it's taking time out of what you've planned for your year, instead of missing out on something else. But, again, you've not got time, you will discuss it at break or at lunch time, that will be a good idea, yes, we could do that together and that would address this outcome. But, then finding time to get together with one and another and actually discuss it is very difficult. (Oliver Interview 1, p. 21/22)

The limited time available for professional discussion, dialogue and planning appear to have restricted Oliver's view of what 'interdisciplinary' learning might be possible or desirable through physical education. Oliver perceived that interdisciplinary learning would reduce the time available for pupils to focus on the experiences and outcomes for physical education and this could lead to poorer experiences in the subject. It was a commonly held view that physical education had to retain its practical nature and any attempt to include learning experiences that would address Numeracy, Literacy or other areas of CfE would have to be authentic and not detract from the focus on the three physical education strands.

When the interviews took place teachers were in the first year of planning for CfE and James' comments indicated that he was planning to develop the curriculum beyond a focus on the three strands in the future.

**James – Ruby School:** We've produced matrices for health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy, but the main focus has been on the three PE strands within the health and wellbeing. Obviously we'll look to develop that further over the coming years but that's what we focused on to best suit the needs of our pupils at this stage, within our own subject. (James Interview 1, p. 6)

The time available led curriculum leaders to focusing on what they felt was possible to plan and enact in the first year of CfE. However, rather than abandon the aspiration to provide interdisciplinary learning schools adopted pragmatic solutions.



Emma discussed how Jade School adopted a focused approach over a week as a way of providing interdisciplinary learning experiences. Jade school had piloted a 'Health and wellbeing week' and Katie at Sapphire school also indicated that a 'Health week' was planned. Emma had recently become the HWB coordinator in the school and reflected on the school's initial attempt to plan an interdisciplinary week:

**Emma – Jade School:** We had a health and wellbeing week which raised awareness and all the rest of it; and we didn't do it again. And we didn't do it again because of, very much people were saying, it's a one-off, it's ... yeah, okay, for one week the kids get to learn in every subject area about health and whatever else. And the other thing with that, actually, which was quite an eye-opener, and which I had to address, was what the other departments' perceptions are of health and wellbeing, and how they would deliver it. It was quite interesting to see that there hadn't, obviously, been ... there wasn't a knowledge there, if you like, of what it fully was. So yeah, we did do that, but last year our focus, as a school, was on health and wellbeing projects; so every department opted into doing a health and wellbeing project, and there was...well, there was the basketball magazine that we ... I didn't label it as a health and wellbeing project, but the other departments used it as theirs. And there is one called the 'triple wrap', which every department in the school was involved in, and it's fantastic; absolutely brilliant. It's coordinated by the [home economics] department. So now ... I think a lot of departments do appreciate what health and wellbeing is, and how you can take a different slant on it; whereas the week of interdisciplinary learning, where it just ... it wasn't ... (Emma Interview 2, p. 5/6)

She then went on to indicate that while 'Health and wellbeing' was initially a whole school approach it was then scaled back as individual departments developed 'projects' related to HWB.

Katie was the only curriculum leader to state that the physical education curriculum would specifically include a block of HWB. She was going to make this change by moving from two fitness blocks to one fitness block and one block of HWB within the physical education curriculum.

**Katie – Sapphire School:** So within health and wellbeing we do some workshops where they're in a classroom. Other parts of it are practical. We look at the benefits of regular exercise. We look at energy intake, energy expenditure, the energy balance, the pupils complete a food diary for a week. We then do a wee workshop on healthy eating and we look at the food plate and proportions of different foods and they can go through and analyse what they're doing well within their diet, what they could maybe improve. And then after having that level of education, we ask them to go away and try and change the -- well, not necessarily change their eating habits, but some of them we may suggest that they might want to change their eating habits.

**Andrew:** *Just to raise their awareness of these kind of issues, yes?*

**Katie:** We do the same for activity levels. So they record what they do over a week. We then do a workshop about, well, you should be doing an hour of activity per day, it could take this form, it could take that form, it could take -- I don't know, walking the dog, etc, etc. But that's what you should all be trying to achieve, and then let's give you the challenge now: could you go out and achieve it? We would promote our extra-curricular clubs at that point as well, that to give them ideas of how they could build up their time. Try walking to school, not taking the bus, etc etc. So there's a before, a bit of education and a chance for them to make some change. And then there's an evaluation process. So they look at what things they maybe planned to change in the future for that, for the energy intake, what they maybe plan to change in the future for their energy expenditure, and we give them a go. So that's kind of what we cover through that. (Katie Interview 2, p 13)

The extracts from Katie and Emma's interviews indicate that HWB was less of a focus for curriculum leaders than policymakers may have intended. As

the structure of the school day and the organisation of the timetable remained the same in all but Coral school, the opportunities for interdisciplinary learning were limited. The result was that teachers' focus was less on 'Health and wellbeing' as a broad concept and more directed towards ensuring coverage of the experiences and outcomes for the 'Physical education, physical activity and sport' element of HWB within CfE.

The limited focus on 'interdisciplinary learning' and the broader aspects of HWB reflected circumstances that curriculum leaders were not always able to influence directly. There were practicalities involved in creating the curriculum and curriculum leaders had to take these into consideration. However, as the findings show first order SBCD involved more than curriculum leaders developing an awareness of practical constraints outwith their control as they worked to plan the curriculum for physical education. What curriculum leaders thought about the curriculum and what they perceived to be the key messages of CfE is central to understanding their actions.

## **5.6 Reinterpretation and reinforcement**

### **5.6.1 Teachers' engagement with the policy context**

All curriculum leaders focused on what they perceived to be 'new' in relation to CfE and in their professional judgement, a priority. Figure 5-2 highlights that the principles of curriculum design, the purposes of the curriculum and

the aims of CfE, strongly patterned curriculum leaders' thinking about SBCE. It was these broader aspects of CfE rather than the experiences and outcomes for HWB that appeared to take centre stage when they were planning and developing their curriculum. The overarching aim of CfE as interpreted by the curriculum leaders was that physical education should seek to develop, knowledge, 'skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work' through fostering the four capacities (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 15). The way teachers spoke about their approach to developing the physical education curriculum reflected their desire to ensure that what was planned aligned with these broad aims. Curriculum leaders were aware of the new language of CfE, with an emphasis on 'skills' 'capacities' 'experiences and outcomes' 'personalisation and choice'; and as extracts from the interviews have already indicated they were not only aware of the language of CfE, they were speaking it.

As noted in Chapter 4 the Local Authority's guidance to schools on the architecture of the curriculum highlighted 'personalisation and choice' as a key principle of curriculum design. This was communicated to readers through an outline of all of the seven principles for curriculum design, followed by a section on 'personalisation and choice'. This was the only one of the seven principles to be singled out and the Local Authority's emphasis was detected in the curriculum leaders' responses. Curriculum leaders considered that in S1, physical education already provided personalisation

and choice, as the curriculum experienced by pupils covered a range of activities (see figure 5-2). It was commonplace to provide a breadth of experience in S1 and then from S2 into S3 to begin to offer more opportunities for pupils to select activities:

**Katie – Sapphire School:** Personalisation wasn't so evident in S1. I guess there's elements of personalisation within lessons, but in terms of the choice of activity, not so much. And that's -- we're personalising learning for pupils more, I think, as they progress into S2 and even more into S3. We offer a couple of enhanced curriculum of subjects within PE for S2 where they can – and this is in addition to their normal PE time and not all pupils will opt into it. There are enhanced curriculum subjects throughout the school, but for PE we offer a sport and recreation taster and a sports leadership taster, so I guess there is an element of personalisation there, an element of challenge for different pupils there, and that will progress on to what we're going to be offering in S3. (Katie Interview 2, p. 3)

The degree of change to the content and activities included in the S1 curriculum was minimal. For Katie 'personalising learning for pupils' related to the developments that were already taking place. Prior to the development of CfE she and her department had considered how to provide pathways for pupils so they could elect to take sports leadership courses in S3.

Across the interviews it was evident that curriculum leaders considered offering a wider range of activities within physical education to provide 'personalisation and choice'. Curriculum leaders reported they remained open to exploring how to extend the opportunities for 'personalisation and choice' within individual lessons and courses. For example, James indicated

that within lessons 'personalisation and choice' also pertained to the learning intentions and the provision of a range of experiences for pupils:

**James – Ruby School:** I think generally there's a lot more choice both within lessons and in the curriculum. A lot of people when you go to meetings, especially around PE, are of the opinion that maybe PE hasn't changed as much as other subjects maybe have, due to the active learning environment that's created anyway. I'm not sure I quite agree with that. There's a huge scope to change and the focus of lessons in many respects should have changed in line with Curriculum for Excellence. I don't say that easily, because obviously I think the practical nature of the subject has to stay the practical nature, but there are social aspects that now need to be covered as a learning intention, which I would say a lot of people...it's a different focus of a lesson to what they would have done before. (James Interview 1, p. 3)

James provided an insight into how he, and other curriculum leaders, had engaged with policy discourses, stating that there was a shift in the focus of lessons, to enable broader learning experiences for pupils. It was through a shift in focus, addressing not only physical aspects for the three strands, but broadening the scope of lessons to consider how pupils could engage in physical education, that he would enact 'personalisation and choice' in the curriculum.

**James – Ruby School:** I believe in getting it right for every single one of our pupils and being able to do that is to give them choice, give them flexibility. Give them responsibility for their learning, make them think a little bit more about their education rather than just handing them ... (James Interview 1, p. 14)

There was a strong theme across the interviews that the development of the four capacities of CfE required a change in teachers' approach to learning and teaching. This was a case of reinterpretation. The principles for

curriculum design were reinterpreted by teachers as their responses to the curriculum guidance were shaped by the discourse of the four capacities.

In the following quotation, Barry emphasised that his approach to teaching and learning had already altered as a result of an increased focus on 'personalising learning' and developing pupils' abilities to engage in the learning process. The language he uses of 'gradual build up' reflects the content of National Qualification courses in physical education. Barry is making clear his desire to ensure that pupils take more responsibility for their learning and outlined that they were able to do this because he has shared the learning intentions with the class.

**Barry – Opal School:** ... if you tie the whole thing together, over whatever, whether it's Curriculum for Excellence, AiFL [Assessment is for Learning], whatever other new research has come out, my teaching has definitely changed in that before you would always orally tell the kids the aim of the lesson, but I think now we're more explicit in actually telling the kids what it is that they're going to learn and what it is that they should know about by the end of the lesson. ... And you kind of, I think you begin to unpick your teaching and begin to tease it out and make it quite clear to the kids why you're doing it, what the reasons are, and what the information that you're teaching they should know at the end of the lesson. (Barry Interview 1, p. 14)

Barry's perception was that the introduction of CfE required pedagogical innovation to involve pupils more in the learning process; this would ensure pupils had opportunities to develop the four capacities in lessons by making the *experiences* they were having and the *outcomes* attained more explicit.

Dawne's 'engagement and interpretation' of national and local curriculum guidance led to a 'reinterpretation' of them and a 'reinforcement' of her current approach in physical education. The statement below captures the interplay of all three aspects of first order SBCD. As an experienced curriculum leader her perception was that she was already doing what CfE advocated teachers and schools should do:

**Dawne – Amber School:** So because it was, kind of, what we do anyway, we read it [Curriculum for Excellence] and we thought, oh, that's fine, let's just go and plan it now. So it wasn't like a huge, kind of, oh, my goodness, we've got to follow these principles, how awful is that? You keep revisiting them, and people remind you in school anyway, to do that. (Dawn Interview 2, p. 3)

The teachers expressed a desire to ensure that 'new' elements of CfE, which they perceived to be of significant importance to the framing of the curriculum, would be addressed. For example, many of the teachers felt 'comfortable' that physical education in its current form would develop the four capacities outlined in CfE. The findings indicate that a 'reinterpretation' of CfE shifted the focus from developing a physical education curriculum to address HWB towards ensuring that the four capacities would be addressed in the curriculum. This was a somewhat surprising finding given the emphasis on HWB within CfE. However, as the 'four capacities' were perceived to be the overriding aim of the curriculum, this patterned the process of first order SBCD and led to curriculum leaders reassuring themselves that transformational change was not required to achieve the aims of CfE.



## 5.7 Summary

While the research participants perceived that key elements of the physical education curriculum could remain unaltered, transformation was required in pedagogical approaches to be consonant with CfE. The curriculum leaders' responses reflected a belief that physical education could develop successful, confident, responsible and effective contributors. There was a shared sense that the curriculum needed to be designed in such a way that it 'covered' the elements that HMIE would expect to see; but in many ways curriculum leaders 'reinterpretation' of CfE led to a view that the changes outlined were matters to be addressed by 'tweaking teaching'. Innovations to their current pedagogical approaches would enable them to address the four capacities through existing practical activity areas. Curriculum leaders' 'engagement and interpretation' led them to develop a view that guidance reinforced what they were already doing and aspiring to achieve

**James – Ruby School:** We still offer everything that we did before, we just deliver it in a different manner and with a different focus.  
(James Interview 1, p. 9)

The design of the S1 curriculum was influenced by all of the processes outlined in chapter 4 and the preceding sections of this chapter. In summary, teachers' approaches to planning were not from first principles as advocated by 'Building the Curriculum 3' but were heavily influenced by the auditing that took place to map the experiences and outcomes onto the existing curriculum

(Scottish Government, 2008a). In the next chapter the focus shifts from first order SBCD, to second order SBCD where curriculum leaders' personal visions, previous experiences and professional judgement about the curriculum influenced what they sought to achieve in practice.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Second Order Engagement: Curriculum enactment in physical education**

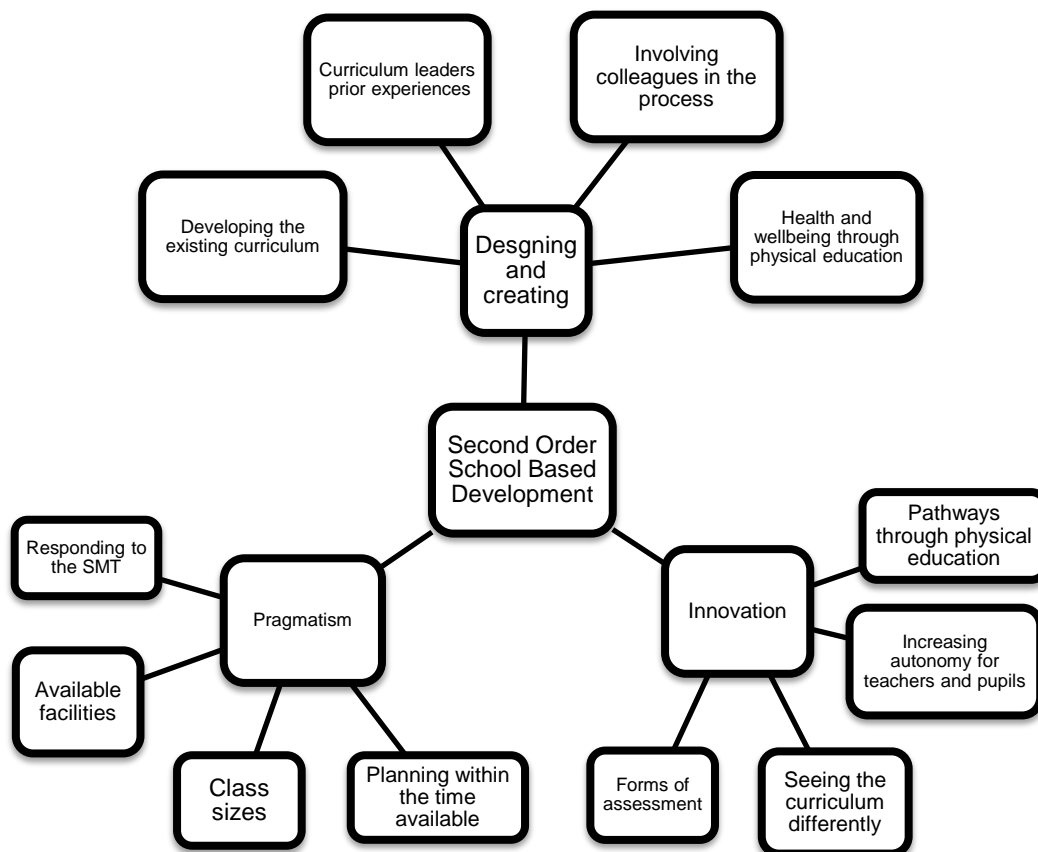
#### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 outlined the findings pertaining to the context in which SBCD took place. Chapter 5 introduced the first order of SBCD and revealed how curriculum leaders engaged with the 'big ideas' of CfE. This final chapter of the findings focuses on second order SBCD and considers what the curriculum leaders sought to achieve in practice. After engaging in the process of first order SBCD curriculum leaders were in a position to determine how to design and create the curriculum. Here 'design' describes how curriculum leaders mapped out the new curriculum to address the 'experiences and outcomes'. Design also related to the decisions curriculum leaders made in relation to the sequence of activity 'blocks' over the school year, assessment strategies and other overarching plans related to the form of the curriculum. CfE contained no specific guidance in relation to curriculum content for physical education, therefore curriculum leaders had to 'create' outlines or more detailed plans for 'blocks' to guide members of the department as to what the 'experiences and outcomes' would be for pupils lesson by lesson.

Providing an in-depth representation of second order SBCD is challenging because each curriculum leader's response was different, patterned by local

conditions and shaped by the range of resources available to her or him.

The approach taken has been to create a typology that represents the actions of the curriculum leaders in this study. In second order SBCD there were three interlinked elements of curriculum enactment. Curriculum leaders' first order engagement patterned and shaped what they 'designed and created' in second order SBCD. In each case the curriculum as enacted involved a degree of 'pragmatism' and 'innovation', as represented in figure 6-1.



**Figure 6-1 Second Order: Curriculum enactment – Understanding curriculum leaders' actions**

This chapter initially considers what the curriculum leaders planned to design in response to CfE. In the first five sections key issues in designing the curriculum are presented. The concept of pragmatic innovation is introduced as the focus shifts to consider how the design and creation of the new curricula in the nine schools were to varying degrees both pragmatic and innovative. The next sections continue to outline the findings that were indicative of a pragmatic approach to curriculum enactment. The penultimate section reports curriculum leaders' perceived innovations in relation to physical education within CfE. The final section focuses on Coral school to draw together key elements from the preceding chapters to highlight how curriculum leaders' actions involved a complex interplay between contextual factors and personal vision.

## **6.2 Designing and Creating**

This section reports the curriculum leaders' judgements of what would be required of them as they designed a curriculum to respond to CfE. Overall curriculum leaders were keen to ensure that they created courses within S1 which would meet the broader aims of CfE. As already highlighted, issues of *attainment* and *accountability* influenced the design of courses. Curriculum leaders were also seeking to ensure that pupils would be well prepared for the senior phase of the curriculum and able to attain highly in National Qualifications. Although each of the curriculum leaders was reading and

responding to the same curriculum guidance contained within CfE, the contextual factors in each school led to different but related approaches to curriculum design.

### **6.2.1 Curriculum leaders' prior experiences**

The development of HWB as a curriculum area within CfE was considered by the curriculum leaders to be a natural extension of what had taken place after guidance on 'Health Education' supplemented the previous 5-14 curriculum guidelines (Learning and Teaching Scotland/Scottish Executive, 2000). This had led to schools adopting a holistic, rather than subject based, approach to health education. Therefore curriculum leaders perceived the existing physical education curriculum to be aligned with the advice laid out in CfE concerning the broad intentions for HWB. The comments from Katie and Sarah are indicative of support for HWB:

**Katie – Sapphire School:** I mean, for me it's just a natural place for it to be under 'health and wellbeing'. I've never considered that it should be anywhere else, I would say. (Katie Interview 1, p. 24)

**Sarah – Coral School:** we're in total agreement that yes, physical education should be in health and wellbeing (Sarah Interview 1, p. 8)

For all nine curriculum leaders, the location of physical education within HWB did not represent a transformation for the subject area. What curriculum leaders did consider to be a transformation was CfE's emphasis on 'skills for life, learning and work', and the development of the four capacities (see

figure 5-2) . It was these elements that were perceived to be significant changes for the subject.

As the extract from Gary's interview exemplifies, curriculum leaders felt that the 'four capacities' had to feature in the new curriculum (see figure 5-2).

**Gary – Quartz School:** I think we try to fit them [the four capacities] into what we were doing. If you look at this document, there's *not much* difference [to] what we were doing. We try to go through [our existing physical education programme] and what we've tried to do is put in the capacities ... yes, we did try and change some of the dynamics of how each individual lesson or blocks of lessons were being taught and we were emphasising different aspects of the Curriculum for Excellence but, in terms of the curriculum, it was adapted into [what we were already doing] .... (Gary Interview 2, p.1) [emphasis added]

Curriculum leaders felt that the experiences and outcomes for HWB were 'not much' different to what they were already seeking to achieve in physical education. However, accompanying the development of CfE were texts carrying a new kind of language for the curriculum. There was a transformation in terminology from the 5-14 curriculum guidelines as new principles for curriculum design were articulated. As already highlighted, it was these 'new' aspects of CfE which patterned teachers' responses.

It is evident in John's second interview that he felt that the strategies already in place enabled physical education to address the four capacities of CfE. The 'four phase lesson' refers to an approach to teaching and learning linked



to 'Assessment is for Learning' (AifL), an earlier initiative to improve attainment (Bryce, 2013).

**John – Topaz School:** So the experience, if you think about within a lesson, an experience within a block, to have an experience and outcome, literacy, numeracy, ICT, health and wellbeing, but also to hit the four capacities, that sounds like a huge ask. And I can see other departments thinking that. But in physical education, PE, there's a natural affinity to the four capacities. [Physical education] is quite well suited [already to the CfE], all the way through the four phase lesson, there's got to be a major experience there for [pupils] in each lesson a learning intention, with success criteria; that's the main focus. (John Interview 2, p. 8)

In a similar vein, Dawne felt that CfE reflected what they were already doing at Amber school. Dawne praised the policymakers for being on 'the right lines', as she expressed her view that what was outlined in CfE was what 'we've always done'. Dawne's perspective was shared by the other eight curriculum leaders. This perspective very strongly patterned their response to designing and creating a physical education curriculum within the curriculum guidelines for HWB:

**Dawne – Amber School:** 'Cos we've still, we've still got, what, we've still got the kind of accreditation side, where kids get their qualifications; we've still got dance, which is great; we've still got all the things we've always done, which is, you know, evaluating and appreciating; coop[eration] and competing; and movement skills [, competencies and concepts] and all that, so that's fine; and we're doing all linking [a reference to interdisciplinary learning]. No, I mean, it's all, it's pretty good actually if, if you can cope with it all (laughs) .... I mean, it does sound good. It sounds as though it's on the right lines, yeah. (Dawne Interview 1, p. 37)

This statement from Dawne provides an insight into how she evaluated CfE. The concluding comment 'it sounds as though it's on the right lines' indicates how Dawne viewed CfE through her existing approach and aspirations for physical education. For Dawne, and the other curriculum leaders, the three strands for physical education ('Movement Skills, Competencies, and Concepts; Cooperation and Competition; Evaluating and Appreciating') within the HWB section of CfE did not lead to a perception that transformation was required (Scottish Government, 2009b, p. 84). Curriculum leaders perceived the experiences and outcomes for physical education to reinforce existing practice. It has been established earlier in the thesis that this perception is not indicative of a wilful or erroneous misinterpretation of curriculum guidance, nor was there evidence of a resistance to engage in curriculum development in the subject area. It became evident that in second order SBCD curriculum leaders' focus was more on addressing areas of CfE outwith the three strands of physical education.

### **6.2.2 Developing the existing curriculum**

Curriculum leaders' approach to designing the S1 curriculum centred on ensuring the experiences and outcomes for the three strands of physical education were 'covered' across the existing 'blocks'. The first of the three strands for physical education, 'movement skills, competencies and concepts', reinforced the view that physical education was a practical subject (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 84). As curriculum leaders approached the

design of the curriculum, at the forefront of their considerations was how to provide opportunities for the development of ‘movement skills’:

**Oliver – Emerald School:** The starting point because we were told we had to eventually incorporate all the health and wellbeing outcomes and experiences, the italic ones that applied to all.

**Andrew:** Do you mean ‘responsibilities for all’?

**Oliver:** Yes, and literacy and numeracy and the skills for life, work and learning, we thought that first and foremost we had to get the physical education ones and the ‘physical activity and sport’ and they were the main [experiences and outcomes]. So, first and foremost we had to get those in place and ensure that we are going to deliver those successfully, so that the kids were going to experience those and then bring the other stuff in. We looked at each outcome ... when we started this when [CfE] was at the draft stage and the wording of it was terrible and [we were] trying to decipher what it actually meant. What are we actually looking for here? What should the pupils be experiencing within this [experience and outcome]? Then we decided...which activities would best cover that [experience and outcome] with a class (Oliver Interview 2, p. 1)

It will be recalled that Oliver, and the other curriculum leaders drew on auditing tools created by Dalradian authority or created by their own school, which provided an overview of the experiences and outcomes for CfE. Taking these as a starting point, they sought to audit the existing curriculum and identify how closely existing practice matched the experiences and outcomes across all areas of CfE.

Curriculum leaders reported ‘ticking the boxes’ when assessing if the existing physical education curriculum would address the experiences and outcomes as laid out in the auditing matrices they used.

**Sarah – Coral School:** ...we sat ticking the boxes off. We could hit that [experience and outcome] in that activity, we could *hit* it there, that lends itself to that one. Literacy and numeracy obviously we did the same thing, ticking the boxes. Then based on what [pupils selected last year in S3-S4] we got the sample of activities, the most popular activities, that's how we've basically created the first year course. (Sarah Interview 1, p. 8) [emphasis added]

Sarah indicated that her department had considered what were 'the most popular activities'. This suggested an element of responsiveness to the views of pupils informing the design of the curriculum. It also reflected Sarah's reinterpretation of personalisation and choice, as a principle for curriculum design, as it was her intention to include activities that pupils regularly chose in S3 and S4 into the S1 curriculum. This aspect of Sarah's approach to designing and creating was not a specific feature of other curriculum leaders' approaches; however, 'ticking the boxes off' was.

It is important to make clear that although curriculum leaders reported 'ticking the boxes' this was more than a surface level approach to planning and designing the curriculum:

**James – Ruby School:** So we've looked at the aim, how can we best achieve that aim? Like I say, we didn't just tick, because this fits well with this. How can we best achieve that aim? How are we going to do that? We decided that we were going to do it best through basketball and best through hockey, so that's where our big ticks came, but going back to the previous point, naturally without too much planning, we also *hit* it in the other team games of volleyball and tag rugby. So we've planned to achieve this in the way that we want to achieve it and give [pupils] the best experience possible and we've done that through basketball and hockey, but naturally we're going to achieve this aim through tag rugby and volleyball as well. That's why I've had a

big tick and little tick on that. (James Interview 2, p. 11) [emphasis added]

These two extracts serve to highlight how curriculum leaders felt that it was their responsibility to ensure that the curriculum ‘hit’ the experiences and outcomes. The implication was that if they could ‘tick off’ where the experiences and outcomes featured in their curriculum then this was a positive result. It also potentially provided reassurance that external inspection would also judge what they had designed as covering the experiences and outcomes. What all of the curriculum leaders planned to enact was patterned by existing practice; and this emerged as a very strong finding. Whilst there were similarities in their approach to design, there were also notable differences in the way CfE was enacted in the nine schools, differences which are explored in the following sections of this chapter.

#### **6.2.2.1 The influence of prior experiences**

Current curriculum arrangements, in terms of the existing curriculum, timetabling arrangements and other aspects of the regimes of *accountability* had a strong influence on what curriculum leaders could design and create. Each curriculum leader’s own prior experiences of curriculum development also played an important part in how they approached the task of second order SBCD.

Katie's account of her approach to enacting CfE in Sapphire school exemplifies how prior experience influenced, but did not determine, curriculum design and how the pre-existing curriculum patterned but did not determine what was created in each school.

Katie had worked at Zircon school in another Local Authority and was appointed as the curriculum leader for physical education at Sapphire school just after the Terrane Local Authority CPD events, (reported earlier in Chapter 4). In the following extract, Katie outlines her approach to designing the curriculum:

**Katie – Sapphire School:** Well, I think the ways it's always happened is that I guess the plan has been not to change things too much because the feeling [has] always been that actually what we were doing was of reasonable quality and we didn't want to massively change things. So for [Zircon and Sapphire] schools, I don't think [we changed anything] in terms of the activities that we were delivering the curriculum through, I don't think that [the physical activities] changed. (Katie Interview 2, p. 1)

Within second order SBCD contextual factors became more of a constraining factor but there were still opportunities for curriculum leaders to exercise professional judgement. Katie's use of the verb 'delivering' to emphasise that the experiences and outcomes would be taught through the existing activities provides an indication of how curriculum leaders envisioned responding to the changes. The curriculum as created would allow teachers of physical

education to exercise professional judgement, teaching CfE through practical activities by making the learning intentions explicit to pupils.

In his first year as a curriculum leader, James was in a different position and his perception was that in his context he would have freedom and autonomy to design and create the S1 curriculum.

**James – Ruby School:** we sat down we looked at learning outcomes and we said in what way can we best achieve that outcome. We didn't say where did we already do this and where does it fit best. We said in what way can we create the best learning environment for our pupils to achieve this aim, and either achieving each aim in two or three different activities, but we have a primary activity where we've really tried to be a little bit creative in each way. Essentially without question, you look at the aim and you look where best can that be achieved with taking into account the nature of our pupils, the facilities of our building, the timetable constraints that we have, the length of block that I have available to me, where can our pupils get the best experience in achieving that experience or outcome. That's the way it has to be done in my opinion. You can't just throw an outcome and tick a box for the sake of saying, right, I've achieved it there, getting on, it has to link and it has to be effective. (James Interview 2, p. 2)

James clearly stated that contextual factors influenced what could be planned. Reading the extract above it is possible to infer that he started from first principles, but in actuality the materials from Dalradian authority were his starting point as he audited the existing curriculum. James emphasised that although he did audit existing practice it was his intention to respond positively to CfE. He acknowledged that it could have been possible to respond to CfE in a strategic way, and this is conveyed by his use of the word 'ticking', to indicate coverage of experiences and outcomes. However, in

contrast the findings reveal his desire, and the other curriculum leaders', desire to ensure that what they designed would provide meaningful experiences for pupils through planned activities mapped against the experiences and outcomes.

Curriculum leaders drew on the materials from Dalradian, Moine and other authorities, as this assisted them in the process of designing the curriculum. To a certain extent this indicated a degree of insecurity. They had the freedom to design the curriculum, but they wanted to be reassured that their approaches to planning were consistent with other schools. The findings reveal a nuanced account of SBCD because what took place across the nine schools reflected teachers' concerns about regimes of *accountability* (see Chapter 4) but at another level they were also skilfully engaged in professional learning and action as they created a response within the constraints of their contexts.

An example of this comes from Katie's indication that it was not possible to enact the same curriculum she had developed in her previous school.

**Katie – Sapphire School:** I think my initial intention was to follow Zircon's model to an extent. One criteria that I was given was that within that two hours [of curriculum time for physical education], pupils must be able to, if they choose to [work towards National Qualifications offered within PE during] those two hours. But what I really didn't want to happen was that every pupil would follow [National Qualifications], because I think that that creates major issues for us.....(Katie Interview 2, p. 9)



Katie's prior experiences as a curriculum leader strongly patterned the way she approached the task of designing the curriculum. She drew on her previous experiences and leadership of curriculum development at Zircon school within a Local Authority in another part of Scotland. However, Sapphire school was a different context and Katie was not able to 'borrow' or transpose the same curriculum design from Zircon school. Her prior learning and experience made her wary of aligning the curriculum with National Qualifications. Katie's approach reflected her ability to draw on her own experiences and her engagement with professional networks to develop the curriculum at Sapphire school.

### **6.2.3 Involving colleagues in the process**

The findings indicate that curriculum leaders were central to the design of the new curriculum. Emma indicated that she had difficulties in designing and creating the curriculum as not all the teachers in her department were as knowledgeable or familiar with the text of CfE. The interviews revealed that all nine curriculum leaders proactively sought information that would assist with the creation of their physical education curriculum. Their engagement in this process led to a broadly positive perspective on CfE.

A somewhat paradoxical finding is that although curriculum leaders held broadly positive perceptions of the curriculum change associated with CfE, at a surface level there appeared to be very limited changes to the physical education curriculum. Curriculum leaders appeared to hold a collective view that CfE sought to bring about what they perceived to be broadly positive changes to the curriculum as a whole. However, as Emma's comments below indicate she did not consider CfE to be 'revolutionary', what was required was a 'fresh' approach to the curriculum.

**Emma – Jade School:** I think Curriculum for Excellence is good. I like it, and I think I've managed to get my department to like it, too, eventually. But yeah, I do, I think it's good. I don't think it's revolutionary; I don't think it's ... I think it just brings back some...you know, it just gets people to be fresh again, and that's what I like about it. So from that point of view, and sort of getting an opportunity to play about a bit, the curriculum has been good. The difficult bits are getting people to be a bit more knowledgeable about it, to do a bit of professional reading about it, to be on board with it. (Emma Interview 2, p. 7)

The degree to which Emma and other curriculum leaders 'play[ed] about a bit' with the curriculum was constrained, patterned and enabled to a greater or lesser extent depending on the curriculum time available.

In all of the nine schools curriculum leaders worked with colleagues and, although there were different approaches to curriculum development, they all indicated that an important element of their role was 'engagement and interpretation' so they could lead the process. Curriculum leaders were, in

Emma's words, 'on board with it' and played an important role in making fellow teachers aware of the opportunities a more flexible curriculum framework provided. In general the approach adopted was to allow other members of the department to assist with the process, as this developed a shared responsibility for the curriculum.

**Gary – Quartz School:** I'm very, very clear that it's not about one person developing this, it's about everybody coming on board and everyone having their part to play in developing new ideas and bringing what we're talking about in Curriculum for Excellence. (Gary Interview 1, p. 5)

Gary's approach involved considering teachers' expertise in a specific activity area and then asking them to create a course.

#### **6.2.4 Activity blocks to deliver HWB through physical education**

Although there were no activities specified for physical education within CfE curriculum leaders designed and created the curriculum around activity 'blocks'. At Emerald school Oliver had shared access to a swimming pool and this became the pivot point around which the rest of the S1 curriculum had to be designed.

**Oliver – Emerald School:** We still haven't finalised next year's programme yet. But, that's what we're looking at, and what we do ... the difficulty is our second years come twice a week and they stay on

the same activity both days .... and they do [that activity] for half the term, so they end up getting about five weeks or ten sessions of an activity. Now, the problem with first year [is] because they are coming three times a week, and because we share the pool with [Amethyst school], so for one term we have the pool on a Tuesday [and] Thursday morning till lunch time, and then have it on a Monday and Wednesday afternoon. Then the following term it's the other way round, they swap round, and they do that swap over the four terms. So, the first thing that has to go on the timetable is swimming to make sure that every first year class is going to get swimming. (Oliver Interview 2, p. 8)

Providing access for each of the four S1 classes for a single 50 minute period required skilful planning; all of the activity blocks for S1 had to rotate around the provision of swimming in ten-week blocks. Oliver made the design decisions about which practical activities to include in the curriculum, although he conceded that not all pupils would 'enjoy' swimming. He planned for a longer block as he felt this would enable a range of water safety skills and other elements of aquatic activities to be covered by the class-teacher. He explained that none of the feeder primary schools would have included swimming as part of their curricula. Accordingly, he made the decision to timetable swimming for all S1 pupils on the grounds that swimming is an important life skill. His planning and the overall design of the S1 curriculum reflected the interplay between facilities, allocation of curriculum time and his desire to provide 'skills for life' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 15).

The practical constraints that Oliver faced in Emerald school were to a certain extent mirrored in all of the nine schools. His decision to include

swimming in S1 had implications for the whole curriculum from S2 through to S6 and he had to consider this when mapping out the curriculum. In a similar way, John indicated his indoor facility could only accommodate one class at a time so if he wanted to ensure equal access to the space across year groups he had to rotate the activities. Oliver, Dawne, Gary, John and Barry all had access to a swimming pool and the availability of this facility played an important role in the curriculum they designed.

James also had to plan the curriculum to include the swimming pool at Ruby school. There was less pressure on the facilities at Ruby school as the roll was small, so for any of the three lessons per week timetabled within the physical education department he only had to cater for two classes. It was also possible to combine the classes into a single class for some periods because of the number of pupils in each class; therefore James was able to retain a degree of flexibility and offer options to classes whilst ensuring that classes had access to the pool during the school year. Rotating classes between different activities and ensuring a degree of parity and equality of experience was a challenge for all of the curriculum leaders. Accordingly, all of the schools indicated that a 'multi-activity model' would be the dominant approach for the design of the curriculum. There were, however, variations between the nine schools regarding the activities included but the foundation for the design of the curriculum was around what could be broadly characterised as 'blocks of activities'.

Policymakers may have intended the three strands of physical education within HWB to lead to a more thematic approach to the curriculum (Scottish Government, 2009a). The findings show that there were variations in the way curriculum leaders planned to enact the curriculum. There was evidence of a thematic approach to planning within and across the 'blocks of physical activities'. Jade and Amber schools included 'blocks' where a modified version of 'Sport Education' was taught. Emma's involvement with the HWB team within Jade school had led to her piloting a modified 'Sport Education' unit of basketball as part of the interdisciplinary project for HWB (Metzler, 2011). As CfE was introduced this unit would remain on the timetable for S1 pupils. Sport Education was already a feature of the S1 curriculum at Amber school but Dawne questioned if Sport Education would enable pupils to develop the levels of 'Movement skills, competencies and concepts' outlined in CfE (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 84). Her view was that the 'Cooperation and Competition' strand was likely to be the focus of that block.

Planning courses to focus on 'strands' such as 'cooperation and competition' was something that curriculum leaders had experience of as this was an approach adopted when designing courses for National Qualifications in physical education taken in S3, 4, 5 and 6 (Brewer, 2003). The preceding chapter has identified how 'reinterpretation' and 'reinforcement' had an impact on curriculum leaders' creation of courses. National Qualifications in

physical education had a unit on the 'analysis and development of performance' which contained four 'strands' (SQA, 2005). As exemplar materials published by SQA linked one strand to one activity area, for example 'skills and techniques' in badminton, this became the commonly adopted approach in schools (Brewer, 2013). Curriculum leaders reported deploying a similar strategy of matching a 'strand' to an activity for the S1 curriculum. Barry explained that by using the 'matrix' he mapped out which activities would be best suited to a focus on specific 'strands' of physical education within HWB:

**Barry – Opal School:** We've got the matrix approach where we have a look and see that ... In all activities we decided that we would have the movement, skills and competencies right across the board. That's something that we're going to teach because we felt, as PE teachers, that's the bread and butter. You want kids to be better at the activity. You want them to learn the skills of it and so on and so forth. And then in some activities that we felt were kind of more co-operation and competition element to them, tended to be like the team games and also the social dance and that sort of thing. And then the evaluation [and appreciation] stuff was things that we felt were, lended themselves better to evaluation. Like gymnastics, swimming, badminton and fitness. They tend to be indoor, just because of the practicalities. I mean if you go and try and assess and evaluate in hockey, it's quite difficult if it's pouring with rain and they've got a video camera at the side, and they've got a rotation of kids trying to use the video camera and then watch a performance. Or if you've got checklists on paper and it's pouring with rain or it's windy and they're blowing about, it's just a pain in the back side. So it's something that we felt we could do indoors more easily with gymnastics, swimming, badminton or fitness. (Barry Interview 2, p. 19)

Emma responded to my question about her planning for physical education in a similar way.

**Emma – Jade School:** We've looked at three main activities that we decided to sort of work with the key experiences and outcomes from PE, the PE experiences and outcomes. And those are gymnastics, basketball and badminton. And each one has a different focus. So gymnastics is evaluating and appreciating. And basketball and badminton fall under the other two headings. So it's looking at co-operation and competition and ... the movement of skills. And what we've done is we've, in two of those activities, created booklets for them. And we have made it explicit to the pupils exactly what the experiences and outcome is. And perhaps before we wouldn't have ... put that into context for them. (Emma Interview 1, p. 8)

The perspective curriculum leaders had as a result of their reinterpretation of CfE was that the experiences pupils would have within the curriculum would alter, but the development of CfE and the curriculum area of HWB did not mean that the content of physical education would require transformation.

**Barry – Opal School:** I mean the nuts and bolts of the activities haven't changed, but what the kids will experience, will have changed. (Barry Interview 2, p. 27)

**Oliver – Emerald School:** [pupils are no longer going to just be told that] the lesson intention will be – “today we're going to learn how to play an overhead clear in badminton”. It will be, “today we will learn how to work with a partner who will feed shuttles for you”. And it just so happens that we're using badminton and that skill as an example. Whereas, the actual focus on the lesson is working together, or communicating with one another or learning to analyse one another. So, it's these skills, yes, it's great they're developing these skills for when they leave school and go into the workplace, but I still think there is a place for subject specialism, which I think we're kind [of] losing a bit. (Oliver Interview 1, p. 3)

The widely held view was that the broad principles of CfE required more of a focus on the process of learning to ensure that ‘skills for learning, skills for



life and skills for work' were developed within the curriculum they designed and created (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 4), see figure 5-2).

### 6.2.5 Health and wellbeing through physical education

Curriculum leaders were specifically asked if what they had planned would address the experiences and outcomes for the HWB area of CfE. Dawne's response provides an important insight into how curriculum leaders perceived their existing activity blocks, coupled with whole school approaches, would address HWB. The extract below includes her clear affirmation that what she has planned for physical education is part of a whole school approach to HWB. It is through a collective effort that schools will 'make a difference' to the HWB of pupils.

**Andrew:** What you've planned together is it a 'good' health and wellbeing curriculum within...for physical education as a subject, or a physical education [curriculum within] which health and wellbeing is well reflected, or is it just a better PE curriculum?

**Dawne:** No, it's health and wellbeing, because we are linking with other departments, and that makes it, you know...I think linking with home economics and PSE is a great start. We need to more than that, though, but I think that that's a great start and we'll develop that. No, it's definitely health and wellbeing, because we're highlighting all these things. But the other thing it's not just PE, it's physical activity in sport here too, so, you know, we're going out linking with an Active Schools co-ordinator. It's all about getting young people more aware, healthier, more active, more willing to co-operate. You know, it's the whole package, so if we're linking with the Active Schools co-ordinator and creating opportunities and encouraging them, then we're going...we have to make a difference. (Dawne Interview 2, p. 30/31)

Dawne and seven other curriculum leaders indicated that they had opted not to alter the activity blocks that formed the physical education curriculum. In contrast, Katie at Sapphire school noted that in her response to CfE there would be a change to one activity block:

**Katie – Sapphire School:** We have different year groups coming down at different times and obviously different priorities, so we came up with the eight activities that we felt were a priority.

What we did include into that was a health and wellbeing activity block and a fitness activity block. Now I think there was already a fitness block, but maybe it was almost like a double fitness block, so through discussion we .... I guess highlighted the differences between *fitness* and *health and wellbeing*. And we came up with our eight activities, so that was the first process. (Katie Interview 2, p. 1) [emphasis added]

Katie was the only curriculum leader specifically to design and create a 'block' focused on HWB. As there had been no other changes planned to the structure of the curriculum the HWB block would be for six weeks. The other curriculum leaders reported that pre-existing fitness blocks would be retained within the overall design of the new curriculum.

The findings point to the influence of whole school approaches to HWB as an important factor in the design of the curriculum. Sarah explained that fitness would be retained within the curriculum but the links to whole school initiatives would improve pupils' awareness of HWB. Towards the end of the following quotation, as already highlighted, it is possible to detect the impact of 'personalisation and choice' as a guiding principle, as pupils would be able to elect to work on different training methods within the fitness block:

**Katie – Sapphire School:** We're not changing how we deliver fitness, I think it's going to be enhanced. I think it's going to be much better. We're starting off having an assembly, a big launch morning, health and wellbeing. You know, how some schools have got health week? Well we're all about trying to make it health week for a whole year, type thing, but we're starting off with this one, getting Terrane Local Authority's leisure team in, getting Smoking Cessation in, getting all these people in on the first day. It's all about, right let's properly look at ourselves and instead of just having a week, we've now got ten weeks to try and change our habits and do this and that. Next time we're linking in with Active Schools. Our Active Schools girl here is magic, really, really good. Hopefully you'll be able to see from our lessons that yes, we will fitness test, but then it's all about giving them experience of different types of training methods, finding what they like, programming them and trying to actually make a difference through different types of training. So if you're not interested in the fitness suite, well, we can do it through conditioning, we can do it that way and because there's four teachers on, they, hypothetically, can opt into different methods of training. Do you see what I mean, so that's where we're trying to go. (Sarah Interview 1, p. 17)

'Fitness' would remain within the physical education curriculum with an emphasis on how to develop 'fitness' because this would address HWB. This is an important finding because it indicated that curriculum leaders' perception of HWB required a focus on developing physical aspects of health through lessons and within specific 'blocks'. There was, however, no clear indication that 'fitness' would be an increased focus of the curriculum.

There was one exception to this, as Barry stressed that 'fitness' would permeate all of the activity 'blocks'. His comments in the following extract revealed that he was aware of the changes between the draft version of the HWB experiences and outcomes and the final version published in 2009 (Scottish Government, 2008b). The extract below indicates some conceptual

confusion, or at least the degree to which it was possible for HWB to be reinterpreted as 'fitness' by curriculum leaders:

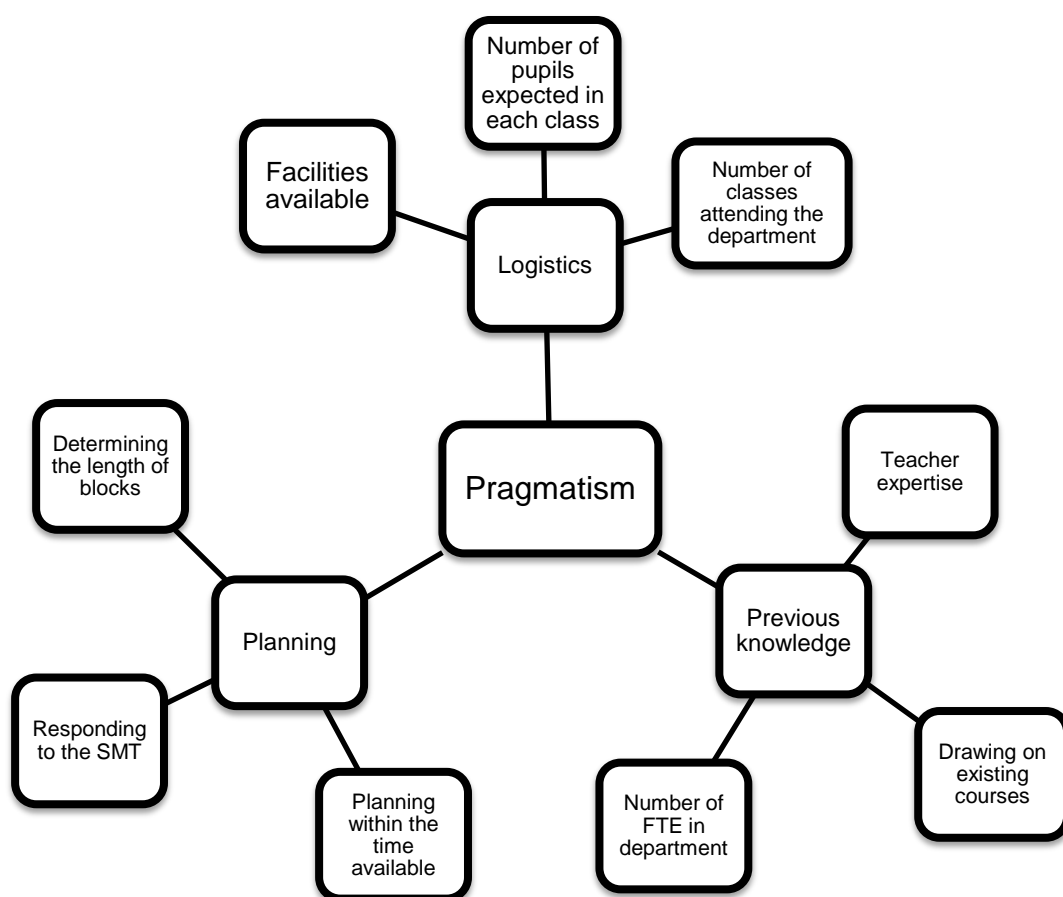
**Barry – Opal School:** the great thing about the experiences and outcomes is that they moved the fitness into the skills and competencies. So what we have decided to do within the department is look at [movement] skills and competencies and fitness in every single activity that we do. Blanket, we're doing that right across and then we either do evaluating [and appreciating] with it, or we do competition and co-operation with it. But the fitness element has got to be in every single lesson, well not every lesson but in every activity in every block, as has the [movement] skills and competencies. (Barry Interview 1, p. 15)

This extract shows that even though he felt there should be a focus on developing fitness, this was to be achieved through the promotion of high levels of physical activity. He did not indicate that the curriculum would be re-orientated to address 'fitness'. His approach was to ensure that pupils would be active in each lesson, and this in addition to a 'block' on fitness would address HWB.

In summary, curriculum leaders perceived HWB as something that permeated the curriculum of the whole school. Katie was the only curriculum leader to modify the form of the physical education curriculum by designing and creating a 'block' for HWB. The other eight curriculum leaders were seeking to address the experiences and outcomes of CfE through existing content.

### 6.3 Pragmatism

The curriculum leaders had to be pragmatic and responsive to the curriculum context of their school. The preceding section has set out their approach to designing and creating the curriculum, where what was possible in each school was very clearly patterned by practical considerations. They had to design a curriculum that worked. Figure 6-2 below provides an overview of the pragmatic way the curriculum was developed across the nine schools.



**Figure 6-2 Being pragmatic - curriculum leaders' approach to enacting the curriculum**

The findings very clearly reveal curriculum enactment was patterned by curriculum leaders' pragmatic consideration of what they perceived to be realistic and sensible within their specific context.

Chapter 4 has revealed the influence that a school's senior management team had in patterning the development of the curriculum. The whole school focus on improving attainment and achievement was one aspect that curriculum leaders considered when planning the curriculum. The scope for developing the curriculum was constrained, patterned and enabled by the senior management team. The vision a senior management team had for HWB, in terms of a whole school approach, had an impact on how curriculum leaders planned for physical education. Decisions about the structure of the curriculum and the time available for each subject were made by senior management teams. Curriculum leaders were not in a position to determine the time allocated for physical education. It was possible for curriculum leaders to make representations to the senior management team to secure two hours of physical education, but they did not hold the power to determine the curriculum time available.

### **6.3.1 Planning within the time available**

The allocation of curriculum time, the staffing for the subject area, facilities and other aspects related to resources were whole school or Local Authority issues that curriculum leaders had limited influence over. Curriculum leaders were therefore designing and creating a response to CfE within a set of parameters that were in most cases outwith their control. However, although there were timetabling parameters and logistical considerations strongly patterning what they could design and create, it would be simplistic to conclude that SBCD was determined by the senior management team in each school. There was a complex interplay between the strategy the senior management team had for planning a whole school response to CfE and the actions of curriculum leaders.

This study focused on what curriculum leaders planned to enact in the first year of CfE. The most constraining or enabling factor in SBCD was the time available for curriculum leaders and their departments to engage in development activities that could have supported SBCD. Curriculum leaders reported that they had engaged in the process and had spent a considerable number of hours seeking to learn about CfE in the hope of determining what would be expected of a new curriculum. They worked to create a curriculum within what they considered to be a limited timeframe. The pressures of time on the process of SBCD appeared to have had an impact on what it was possible to achieve.

Curriculum leaders had to consider what they could realistically enact within the timeframe they had. The auditing of the curriculum was a pragmatic approach to SBCD as this enabled areas of existing practice aligned with CfE to be identified and incorporated into the design of their response to CfE. The auditing of the curriculum itself took time as the curriculum leaders reported that senior management teams required them to conduct audits for the three areas of responsibility for all; Numeracy, Literacy and HWB. This was in addition to auditing the physical education curriculum using the matrix created by Dalradian or Moine authority.

The time available for planning also related to the curriculum time for physical education. Oliver had 150 minutes of curriculum time for physical education divided into three 50 minute periods throughout the week. Earlier in the chapter it was noted that Oliver planned a ten-week block of swimming. This enabled each pupil in S1 to have one 50 minute period of swimming for ten weeks. On the basis of his knowledge of how best to provide a connected and developmentally appropriate curriculum he would have preferred to have timetabled all of the 150 minutes of curriculum time each week for swimming for three weeks but this was not possible. There were pragmatic considerations related to changing, travel time and use of equipment in lessons. In the schools where the timetable altered this then provided the catalyst for change as the curriculum leaders had a new 'unit of thought' for the curriculum. Changing the structure of the school day, something that only



took place in Sarah's school, had a significant impact on the design of the curriculum, as new possibilities opened up.

The next section on 'innovation' will explore in detail how altering the school day became an enabling factor in SBCD. At this point it is important to consider the more common response to CfE, which was to make limited, or no, changes to the school timetable.

Oliver explained that the time available and the number of classes that had to be accommodated in the department, at any period of the day, was the key factor in determining the design of the curriculum:

**Oliver – Emerald School:** It wasn't so difficult with the group of three, but when we've got four classes in [the department] and they all have to [go] into the games hall to do basketball, they all have to get back into the games hall another time to do badminton. That was a discussion we had as well, do we do basketball in first year and badminton in second year? If you've got four classes trying to rotate round different spaces they tend to all want to get full access to a games hall. It's not easy. (Oliver Interview 2, p. 9)

These logistical considerations strongly patterned how Oliver could use the curriculum time and the facilities available in the department and thus the design of the curriculum. The increase from three classes to four presented Oliver with a challenge. He had to match the facilities available with the expertise and content knowledge of the staff timetabled for each period of the day.

### 6.3.2 Teachers' areas of expertise

The existing curriculum 'worked' in each school because teachers had the expertise available to teach the activities timetabled. It appeared to be the case that in each school what was currently planned reflected not just what could be planned, but what curriculum leaders considered to be the best use of the resources available. In developing a response to the CfE curriculum leaders pragmatically engaged members of the department to write 'blocks' on the basis of activity specific expertise.

This approach appeared to be both constraining and enabling, in that on one level responding to CfE became framed within activity specific blocks, but at the same time it appears to have developed teachers' ownership of the curriculum. As indicated in chapter 4, John and his department had engaged in professional dialogue about how to revise and develop what was enacted to ensure the experiences and outcomes for physical education were covered in what they collectively planned.

Barry reported that because of changes to the staffing of the department he had been able to alter the curriculum to match their expertise.

**Barry – Opal School:** ..... when I first started there were three male members of staff and one female. And the male members of staff

weren't big on dance, nor were they big on gymnastics, but now we're doing more [dance and gymnastics]. (Barry Interview 1, p.18)

Barry's comments, and similar statements made by other curriculum leaders, served to highlight that developing a focus on HWB for the physical education curriculum was a challenge as teachers within the departments were often skilled in discrete areas of physical activity. At Quartz school Gary indicated that in his department of 12 physical education teachers they each had specific responsibilities for leading activity areas and dual roles in that they led the curricular, and extensive extra-curricular sporting, programme.

### **6.3.3 The patterning effect of facilities, pupils and class sizes**

The facilities available in each school patterned the curriculum created. James specifically highlighted that he had access to 'good' facilities and this had an impact on what he could timetable. Access to outdoor facilities was something that Sarah mentioned as a constraining factor. Coral school was in an urban location with only one small multi-purpose outdoor all weather space, able to accommodate one class of pupils. This is in stark contrast to the facilities at Quartz school with its 50 hectares of grounds. The facilities available (indoor and outdoor) had a significant impact on the curriculum.

There was evidence that planning decisions were a complex blend of pragmatic considerations interwoven with curriculum leaders' interpretation of the curriculum guidance.

**John – Topaz School:** We're looking to change that, or I'm looking to change that and try and get more PE time. And it's that balance of do you want quality PE with 20 students or do you want PE with 33 students in your class? And it's trying to make a balance there. So there's not been any formal changes to the timetable as yet, there will be. I was part of a senior phase working group, and as the S1s come into the senior phase approach what national four, five will look like, then yes, there's going to be changes to the timetable. There'll be changes to the lesson length, the block length and how that can encompass an extra period of PE. (John Interview 2, p. 9)

John's reference to 20 or 33 pupils in a lesson refers to the fact that physical education is not considered to be a practical subject for the purposes of planning, whereas the number of pupils in a class for chemistry is capped at 20 (Scottish Government, 2010b). This study highlights that practical issues such as class sizes within a year group can pattern the curriculum developed in a school, and in the day-to-day operation of a department can overshadow broader concerns of enacting specific aspects of CfE.

John also provided an important insight into how he planned to develop the curriculum in the second year of CfE after obtaining additional funding to purchase mountain bikes.

**John – Topaz School:** There's a lot more to consider than just the timetabling and what's there just now. There's your class sizes, there's the demographic area. Yes, there's the resources, so we do have pitches. But for instance what we're now doing is we've actually

bought mountain bikes because we're thinking well, look outside, we've got the woods, we've got [Gemstone Park nearby] and we're in an affluent area where students have mountain bikes, so we don't necessarily have to buy lots. So let's trial it. So we are. Now, in retrospect looking at trying to look at experiences and outcomes and say you know what, we could pull that across and use it here. (John Interview 2, p. 4)

There were opportunities for John to plan for experiences in an alternative activity at Topaz, even though he had not had an increase in curriculum time in the first year of CfE. John was imagining what would be possible in the future and because of the additional curriculum time in year two of CfE, the location of the school, the expectation that pupils would have their own bikes and the additional resources provided by the senior management team, he was planning to alter the content of the curriculum. The curriculum leaders' circumstances were different. While John used a matrix approach to planning, there was evidence of innovation in SBCD. The following sections address this final theme of innovation, which was a feature of the actions of curriculum leaders to greater and lesser degrees.

## **6.4 Innovation**

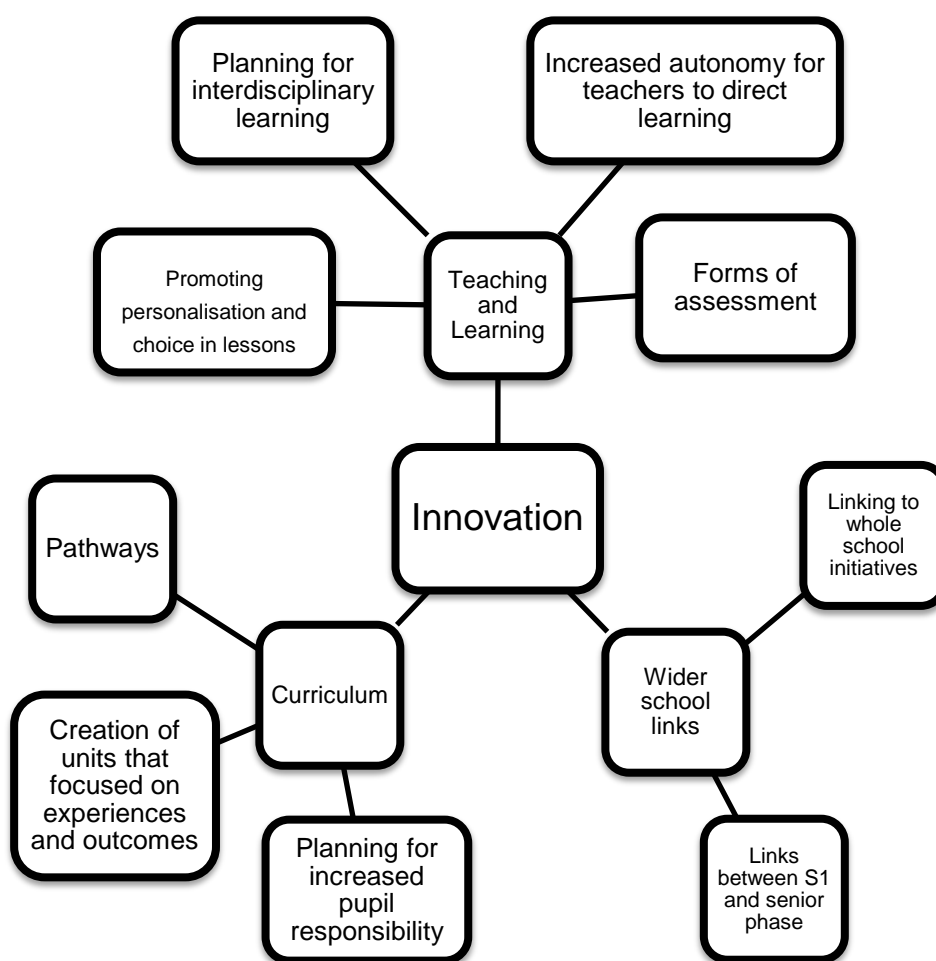
### **6.4.1 Curriculum leaders seeing the curriculum differently**

This study as a whole enables the nuances of SBCD to be understood in more depth. This final section examines curriculum leaders' new way of seeing physical education within the curriculum. It has been established that

there was a degree of stasis in that curriculum leaders perceived CfE to reinforce what was already taking place in schools. Curriculum leaders' responses to SBCD appeared to suggest that they were not changing the focus of physical education. Their primary consideration was that 'movement skills, competencies and concepts' would remain at the core of the curriculum (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 84). However, there was also evidence to challenge the common conception that educational change only takes place at the level of educational policy. The findings indicate that there was a degree of innovation in each of the nine schools.

In each school, curriculum leaders were able to innovate in their own way in response to the introduction of CfE. The innovations varied from school to school, but what was evident was that curriculum leaders took action to 'improve' what they currently provided within the physical education curriculum. Their intentions were to provide a curriculum that would address the expectations of the senior management team and HMIE by addressing the wider aspirations of CfE, whilst maintaining the practical nature of the subject. Figure 6-3 below provides an overview of how the actions of the

curriculum leaders as they engaged in SBCD represented innovation:



**Figure 6-3 Innovation - curriculum leaders' responses to Curriculum for Excellence**

While an important consideration was how the curriculum would be perceived by others, as already noted, what was designed and created in each school went beyond surface level compliance. In each school SBCD was patterned by factors that were within and outwith the locus of curriculum leaders. The degree of innovation varied depending on the context but there was evidence of innovative approaches to the overall design of the curriculum to address

the experiences and outcomes of CfE. Innovation was evident in the way the curriculum as designed and taught would make more explicit links to whole school initiatives and between S1 and S6 courses. Through innovative approaches to teaching and learning curriculum leaders sought to increase personalisation and choice; achieve interdisciplinary learning and better integrate assessment into the physical education curriculum.

#### **6.4.2 Forms of assessment**

Chapter 4 highlighted that curriculum leaders' responses to CfE were patterned by the focus on improving attainment in high stakes assessment in 'Higher' courses. There was evidence that existing practice was being altered so that in new 'blocks' there were opportunities for peer and self-assessment in S1. Curriculum leaders sought to ensure that there was a system in place to track pupil progress. An important consideration was that whatever was employed would involve pupils and enable them to reflect on their 'experiences and outcomes'. As Sarah indicated, one approach adopted was to create a booklet to track pupils' progress:

**Sarah – Coral School:** Well, this was the big debate and it's interesting because this year in the working groups people mentioned assessment throughout it and then we all came to the consensus of well, what we'll do is get a ring binder for every tutor group and we'll put all of the 'I can' statements, ... we'll put all the 'I can' statements for each activity in a ring binder. The kids will also have a booklet and they'll have their own, so it can be self or peer assessment, and they'll tick it off. (Sarah Interview 1, p. 11)



Barry noted that using information and communication technology (ICT) was an increasing part of his approach to assessment, enabling pupils' progress and attainment to be captured and stored digitally. As the previous section showed, the number of pupils in a year group was a factor which could pattern curriculum leaders' approaches. Emma was aware that James was using ICT to create portfolios for pupils, but given the number of pupils and the resources available to her at Jade school she felt unable to pursue this strategy.

**Barry – Opal School:** It's only one way of assessing as well, because ...we've got the video analysis stuff as well, and the dialogue that you have with the pupil. So there's also work sheets that we can do with them. I know there's another school have got an entire S1 booklet where the pupils ...would be expected to fill out quite a lot of stuff. Whereas we can do match analysis sheets and wee bits and pieces. (Barry Interview 2, p. 13)

**Emma – Jade School:** I went to see James, he was showing me, you know, all the stuff that they've got in terms of the ICT stuff, and what can be used and how this can look, it was amazing, you know. So I think it's great to see what ICT can offer but we don't have the right stuff here or the time and know how to do what they're doing, but I was kind of like, oh, this is brilliant, you know. (Emma Interview 2, p. 4)

Emma observed later in her interview that the 'blocks' planned provided opportunities for assessment and it was the responsibility of the teacher to exercise her or his professional judgement on how to use the booklets with each class. Across the nine schools curriculum leaders were exercising the freedom afforded to them by CfE to encourage more professional autonomy in all matters of teaching, learning and assessment.

### 6.4.3 Increasing autonomy for teachers and pupils

Curriculum leaders perceived CfE to be a less prescriptive curriculum framework and although each curriculum leader mapped out the curriculum there was a definite move to enshrine the principle of autonomy for teachers within each 'block'. The findings show that at some point in the process of SBCD, each department had worked together. Curriculum leaders reported that teachers were encouraged to make their own decisions about how to address the experiences and outcomes within and across 'blocks'.

**James – Ruby School:** We have more flexibility within lessons. We might not keep the same teacher with the same class all the time. We might change things up depending on activities. The pupils have a wider range of experiences, like I say, we're trying to offer alternative activities, maybe more than what we would have. (James Interview 1, p. 9)

In contrast, John and Oliver indicated they had less room to manoeuvre. However, there was still strong evidence that teachers in their departments were being encouraged to engage in the development of the curriculum.

All schools reported developments relating to the role pupils played in the lesson. The extract from Emma's interview captured how her approach to designing an increased role for pupils had been informed by CPD within the cluster.

**Emma – Jade School:** we've incorporated co-operative learning in that as well which is something that as a cluster we are looking at. As [a] learning and teaching cluster we are looking at co-operative learning. (Emma Interview 1, p. 9)

Emma perceived the way her whole school was approaching co-operative learning to be a major change. With the exception of Quartz school, all of the curriculum leaders perceived an increased role for pupils in lessons to reflect the principles of CfE. Terrane Local Authority, as part of their efforts to support the introduction of CfE, had invested in a 'cooperative learning academy':

**James – Ruby School:** There are endless amounts of CPD in co-operative learning which [Terrane Local Authority] obviously see as a vehicle to successful implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. This school alone has put every [curriculum leader] through [the] Cooperative Learning Academy, but I've not yet been through it, I should say that .. [curriculum leaders] have been going on weekends, it's a three day course. It's a Thursday, Friday, Saturday and endless amounts of staff have been put through that. So Terrane has invested heavily into the co-operative learning side of things. (James Interview 2, p. 4)

James, Katie and Dawne all reported that they had sought to incorporate co-operative learning approaches into the curriculum, with the intention of creating increased opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Co-operative learning approaches were one strategy to enable the development of the four capacities through physical education lessons.

**Katie – Sapphire School:** I've gone through, for example, co-operative learning – CPD – and so I take these things back and try and incorporate them within my lessons. Increased pupil responsibility is possibly something that there's more of a focus on within my

lessons, but then I think back and was that ... I would like to think that that would have been a focus seven or eight years ago anyway, so I like to try and ... and AifL, again, that was a big focus of my [University] course so I don't see that that's hugely changed. Maybe I've improved my ability to make use of it within lessons and maybe see more of a place for it. Has it changed? Possibly as well in the feedback that I would maybe give to pupils, where you're maybe now pushing them more within different aspects of the subject than I was before. (Katie Interview 1, p. 14)

Leadership courses were part of the curriculum in S3, S4, S5 and S6 in all but Quartz school<sup>18</sup>. These leadership courses provided a pathway for pupils not opting for National Qualifications, or in some cases such as Katie's school, a leadership course could be elected as an additional course.

**Katie – Sapphire School:** So the aim now is that when they come for their two hours [of physical education per week], they can follow [National Qualifications], they can follow a sports leadership route or a performance improvement route, but the intention would be that if they chose to carry any of them on [in]to S4 there would be some level of accreditation for each of those [pathways] ..... so the ones that are really keen on PE could potentially do a sports leadership route and a National Qualifications route. (Katie interview 2, p. 10)

Curriculum leaders were therefore making a link between the existing leadership courses with what CfE sought to develop from S1.

Curriculum leaders perceived their efforts to be an enhancement of what was existing practice. Barry was focusing on developing pupils' awareness and

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<sup>18</sup> Quartz school had an active Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme where many pupils participated in activities to develop and enhance their leadership skills.

understanding of the experiences they have in lessons through the  
'evaluating and appreciating' strand of physical education:

**Barry – Opal School:** ...this is maybe just saying, well these are the things that we have been doing in the past, but now we can actually be a bit more focused about co-operation and competition, looking at evaluating and you now see the needs that, well if the Higher is the only thing that's going to stay, it might be worthwhile getting kids to be able to evaluate and to be able to understand their own and others' performances in S1 and we'll gradually build that through till we get to the Higher, where it's vitally important for the qualification. But also when we're looking at kids, especially within this school, we're looking at target setting quite a lot and kids being able to evaluate throughout the school and not just in physical education, but their own and others' abilities, that then puts it on the map a bit more. (Barry Interview 2, p. 7)

This is an example of the innovation taking place in schools across the study.

Barry was making the links between the S1 curriculum and the Higher physical education course, but he was also viewing the experiences that pupils have in lessons where they are 'evaluating and appreciating' as developing an improved level of awareness and understanding that will have an impact throughout the curriculum.

Barry also felt that it was important for him as curriculum leader, and for physical education as a subject, to consider how the development of CfE could lead to changes throughout the secondary school. He considered a focus on 'skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work' to have significance and in his interview he outlined a possible vision for responding to this policy idea (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 4). Barry's vision was for

pathways, as these would link together the focus on 'personalisation and choice', 'skills for learning, life and work' and could lead to improved attainment for pupils.

#### **6.4.4 Imagining pathways through, and within, physical education**

Curriculum leaders' vision for pathways through and within physical education had emerged as they worked on enacting the S1 curriculum:

**James – Ruby School:** Certainly the way I'm developing the curriculum is based around the Curriculum for Excellence. I would certainly say that looking for career pathways and putting them towards pathways, giving them a wider range, more choice, more flexibility I think is a direct link to the Curriculum for Excellence, yes. (James Interview 1, p. 9)

James' comments reflect a more instrumental view for the curriculum. He viewed the development of pathways within, and through, physical education as helping pupils prepare for what took place after schooling. Although none of the curriculum leaders specifically mentioned the phrase 'positive destinations' or 'relevance', 'pathways' were very clearly designed to make the curriculum more pupil focused with the intention that there would be increased attainment and employment prospects for pupils (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 5).

While John, from Topaz school, mentioned 'pathways' in his interview, what was striking about his response to CfE was that he was working in a school where levels of attainment were already high (see Table 4-2). There was a perception that the existing timetable and curriculum structure were supporting above national average levels of attainment. John had two separate 50 minute periods of physical education in S1 and in S2, which limited his ability to redesign the curriculum. However, his personal vision for physical education was well developed and, as already noted, he outlined plans to include mountain biking in the next academic year to help to provide 'personalisation and choice'. At the same time, John felt that physical education needed to move beyond viewing choices between physical activities as addressing personalisation and choice:

**John – Topaz School:** Well, [personalisation and choice] that's something that PE's never offered properly I don't think. ... we could say personalisation and choice, we invite them down into the PE department for a couple of blocks, a couple of lessons and say would you like football, would you like games, would you like rounders? To me that's not really personalisation and choice. Personalisation and choice is which units they're going into. So there's quite an interesting model that we've piloted here where we've taken it out of S1 because I think it's just too early. But they get an option, one block per week is their core PE, so they get delivered the experiences and outcomes. The second lesson in the week, they still get the experiences and outcomes, but they get a choice of activity, and the activities are community based, leadership based or skills based. So they've got three choices there. So for community they may do charity work, so they're looking at sponsored skipping, sponsors, and then link that back in here for leadership, it's a diluted [Sports Leaders] course and for skills it's the skills competencies. We piloted it on the traditional games, football, hockey, rugby. And to me that's personalisation and choice. (John Interview 2, p. 5)

For John, the concept of a pathway for pupils embodied CfE and provided an innovative approach to enacting the curriculum. John felt that S1 was too early to require pupils to select specific pathways such as 'community, leadership or skills and competencies'. The S1 curriculum was designed to provide the foundation from which to select the pathways that he established through a coherent programme of pathways in S2 to S6. He saw the development and creation of pathways as a way to address the subject specific experiences and outcomes, the broader principles of CfE and enable higher levels of attainment in national qualifications. This was a very significant development as it offered an alternative to the multi-activity approach to curriculum design. John's concept of 'pathways' has not been reported previously in the literature and represents a departure from contemporary scholarship in the physical education curriculum literature advocating a 'models' based approach to curriculum design (Kirk, 2010; Metzler, 2011).

### **6.5 Pragmatic Innovation as exemplified by Coral school**

The findings of this study indicate that in each of the nine schools SBCD was a complex process with curriculum leaders' efforts and actions patterned, but not necessarily wholly determined, by the context of the Local Authority and school. In this final section, curriculum development at Coral school is presented in some detail. The rationale for singling out Coral school is that the context for SBCD altered as a result of a recent HMIE inspection. This



shaped first order SBCD and enabled Sarah to design and create a curriculum in second order SBCD that differed from the other nine schools in the study.

HMIE inspected Coral school and there was a number of concerns raised in the inspection report. Terrane Local Authority was required to conduct a follow-up inspection. As a result of HMIE raising concerns about the provision of curriculum time for physical education, the senior management team took action to address this in preparation for the Local Authority follow-up inspection. Sarah explained that, as part of the senior management team's response to the HMIE inspection, and a desire to create and design a curriculum architecture that enabled interdisciplinary learning, the structure of the school day was altered to provide three 50 minute periods at the end of each school day.

This changed the context for SBCD, the unit of thought for Sarah moved from 50 minute lessons twice a week to a block of 150 minutes once a week. Changing the timetable provided new opportunities for the way curriculum time could be used for physical education. As the extract below highlights, even though there had been a marked transformation of Coral School's curriculum structure, Sarah's first order engagement with CfE led her to believe that it represented no new challenges for her department. Her

assessment was that what they already had in place and their approach would address the proposed curriculum changes.

**Sarah – Coral School:** When you look at the experiences and outcomes and say you are teaching a team game, right, yes of course you get the kids to referee, so you're ticking boxes on those experiences and outcomes, adopting roles et cetera. I suppose you look at a course outline from last year or two years ago and then you look at the experiences and outcomes that we've ticked from the matrix when we were looking at which ones we could hit in different subjects, you're doing it already. There's really nothing that new I think, really. I think we were doing it. (Sarah Interview 1, p. 11)

However, post HMIE inspection Sarah was presented with a timetable for S1 where the physical education would be the last three periods of each day. This provided the catalyst for pragmatic innovation.

Coral school had limited outdoor facilities within the school grounds, therefore the change to the timetable created opportunities to travel off-site and use facilities that had hitherto been considered unworkable within a 50 minute lesson. This change, coupled with other pragmatic considerations such as the availability of staff and when classes were timetabled for physical education, enabled Sarah to consider how to offer 'personalisation and choice' from S1.

**Sarah – Coral School:** Yes, we've got the ability to go out and travel because we've got these three 50 minute periods and we've got all of the first years coming together. So all our staff are on at the one time which means that as a first year pupil, throughout the blocks, you've got a choice of four activities. The way we've blocked those activities, like you were talking [about] the other day, maybe is it narrowing and yet we're supposed to be providing a breadth of activities ... you know,

and all the rest of it, but I don't think it will be narrowing their experiences because of the nature of how we've blocked the activities. I think that there's still a varied enough curriculum. (Sarah Interview 1, p. 4)

Sarah was the only curriculum leader who had planned to provide options for pupils in S1. There was also evidence that her department's approach was based on prior innovations that piloted a way of offering increased choice to pupils within the curriculum.

**Sarah – Coral School:** We've blocked the activities based on our experience with the first years this year where we introduced personalisation and choice this year. So in August when the first years came for the first lesson we explained what was happening. We gave them a list and we had about 15 sporting activities on it and they had to rank them in their order of what they'd like to do. We told them throughout their two years they would be covering seven of them, but we wanted ten so we then pooled [their responses and designed the curriculum that way] ... (Sarah Interview 1, p.4)

The innovations in providing 'personalisation and choice' differed from John's concept of pathways. However, Sarah's plans were still developing and were patterned by whole school interdisciplinary projects rather than subject specific pathways. The alterations to the school day enabled afternoons to be organised so that 'triple' periods could enable different year groups to select specific interdisciplinary projects. These were in addition to the changes to the physical education curriculum and were designed to provide an innovative approach to connecting experiences and outcomes from different curriculum areas within CfE.

In the past the limited outdoor facilities at Coral school had made it necessary for pupils to walk to nearby playing fields. This had been possible within 100 minute lessons but changing and travel time reduced the time for pupils to engage in the activities planned. The development of blocks of 150 minutes enabled pragmatic innovation within physical education. It became possible for Sarah to design the curriculum to include more content in each activity block. As all of the S1 classes were timetabled at the same time there were pressures on in-school facilities, but there was increased flexibility, as pupils could choose options in each block, some of which would involve travel to other venues/facilities. Sarah and her department considered how to use the 150 minute blocks of time differently. For example, a fitness for life block was in development that would involve pupils visiting and using local leisure centres. While there was a unique set of favourable circumstances that led to pragmatic innovation at Coral school, the findings strongly demonstrate that the introduction of CfE led to all of the curriculum leaders displaying such a pragmatic approach.

Curriculum leaders focused on pragmatic innovation in that their approaches were carefully considered in terms of what was feasible within their context to ensure that the broad aims of CfE were addressed. Teachers' collective efforts at curriculum enactment are thus depicted as pragmatic innovation as this encapsulates their responses to policy discourses as they planned a

curriculum that would in their view effectively address the broad aims and purposes of CfE.

## **6.6 Summary**

Curriculum leaders 'engagement and interpretation' reflected their professional learning activities as they read curriculum guidance and considered how best to address the content in the context of their school. The texts of CfE were written to be engaged with. They provided a curriculum framework and curriculum leaders reported that over time they had gained greater confidence in their approach to developing what would take place in each school. The findings reveal that there was a degree of anxiety that in the introduction of CfE there had not been sufficient time to engage in the development work required. Curriculum leaders were aware that CfE was not a curriculum package. It was not possible to 'implement' the curriculum. They had to create their response to CfE.

The Scottish Government's aspirations to provide schools and teachers with autonomy led to a curriculum framework designed to be less prescriptive. The ability of teachers to engage in, and take ownership of, developing the curriculum has been revealed in the findings chapters. It was also evident that although government policy, and curriculum texts can and do produce organizational effects, contributing to the transformation of curriculum in

schools. Importantly, the study has revealed that how the curriculum was developed in each school, and the extent of the innovation was subject to conditions of possibility which included organizational structures and the teachers' own understanding of the potential and priorities for action. All of these factors represent powerful generative mechanisms that operate at different levels and to a greater or lesser degree explain how schools and teachers responded.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Discussion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The findings chapters have provided a detailed account of the contextual factors that patterned and shaped SBCD, how curriculum leaders engaged in SBCD and what they planned to enact to bring CfE into existence in their school. This chapter discusses five themes emerging from the findings chapters and considers these within the context of previous research and scholarship in physical education and curriculum development. The five themes are: the context of curriculum development; the role of the local authority, the influence of regimes of accountability; teachers' agency in SBCD; and physical education within HWB. These five themes, coupled with the overarching thesis that curriculum leaders in physical education have engaged in pragmatic innovation when enacting CfE, provide the basis for the conclusions reached in this chapter.

This chapter includes a model (figure 7-3) which captures the processes of educational change as experienced and reported by the curriculum leaders in this study. The findings chapters indicated that in the process of responding to CfE curriculum leaders engaged in two separate but related orders of SBCD. First order SBCD refers to the processes through which the



curriculum leaders engaged with policy discourses related to CfE and second order SBCD refers to the activities undertaken within the school context to enact the curriculum. While the findings provided an overview of first and second order SBCD, this discussion chapter develops a more nuanced account of the factors that have patterned curriculum enactment across the nine schools in the Local Authority.

A teacher's sense of agency in curriculum reform requires consideration of *affordances* (Chemero, 2003), particularly as it can be suggested that flexible curriculum frameworks have to a certain extent increased teachers' roles in the development of the curriculum (Chan, 2012). This contrasts with a tendency in previous studies of curriculum change, to present the management of education and policy (*structure*) as constraining teachers' actions (*agency*) (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001; Kirk, 1990; Zhu et al., 2011). It is important to consider: the degree to which teachers see curriculum guidance as an opportunity to reform curriculum and pedagogy; and to what extent curriculum guidance creates an *affordance* for teachers' agency (Chemero, 2003; Priestley et al., 2012). The discussion draws on Archer's (1995, 2003) perspective on structure and agency to develop an account of what have been important generative mechanisms patterning, enabling or constraining SBCD in physical education across the nine schools of the local authority.

As highlighted in the findings, a range of contextual factors pertaining to SBCE patterned the enacted curriculum in the nine schools. This chapter builds on the account provided in the preceding chapters to interpret the interplay between the policy context and the agency of curriculum leaders. To this end, it analyses how discourses and mechanisms of accountability led to a reinterpretation by curriculum leaders of what required development so that the physical education curriculum would address the values, aims and purposes of CfE. This process of reinterpretation had an impact on the enactment of curriculum. Prior to examining each of the five themes, the next section paves the way for the analysis that follows by outlining how Archer's (1995, 2003) specific approach to considering change in society aids in the analysis of the study's findings.

## **7.2 Morphogenesis and School Based Curriculum Development**

Turning now to set out how Archer's (1995, 2003) morphogenetic approach to change and her account of structure and agency can inform an analysis of curriculum leaders' experiences of SBCE, she has noted that:

Fundamentally, we cannot account for any outcome unless we understand the agent's project in relation to her social context. And we cannot understand her project without entering into her reflexive deliberations about her personal concerns in conjunction with the objective social context that she confronts. (Archer, 2003, p. 131)

Consonant with Archer's approach, this study has revealed the importance of attending to: the social contexts of curriculum change and their shaping effects; to teachers' interpretations of, and responses to, these contexts; and to teachers' pursuit of their own 'projects' driven by their values and beliefs.

This study, drawing on Archer's work, adopted a research approach that sought to account for **both** *structure* and *agency* in SBCD, and their intertwined relationships. Archer (2003) defines morphogenesis as a process which accounts for the ceaseless cycles of interaction between *structure* and *agency*. She acknowledged that although 'structural and cultural emergent properties are held to impinge upon agents .... all social action is necessarily contextualised and .... all contexts embody social forms' (Archer, 2003, p. 131). It is for this reason that Archer (2003) combines 'morpho', to represent form and structure, with 'genetic' to reflect her view that society is shaped and formed by 'agents' through intended and unintended consequences as a result of their actions. In the context of this study, morphogenesis pertains to the desire of the Scottish Government to change and develop the school curriculum. The Scottish Government is not able to bring about a specific course of action without the agency of other actors. The curriculum in the nine schools emerged as a result of, but is not reducible to, the actions of the curriculum leaders. Their actions took place within the context of their school and its culture.

While Archer's (1995, 2003) morphogenetic approach is key to the exploration of the interplay between curriculum leaders and their context(s), the following interpretation of what took place in the nine schools also draws on other researchers' work, such as Fullan (1993a, 1999) and Ball (1994). As revealed in the review of literature, previous studies have sought to explore the actions of teachers *or* the impact of policy on the practice of physical education (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007; Curtner-Smith, 1999; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001; Kirk, 1990; MacLean et al., 2015; MacPhail, 2007; Zhu et al., 2011). The findings presented in the preceding three chapters have indicated that SBCD is a complicated and complex process nested within the policy context.

Curriculum leaders' actions in SBCD have brought about changes to the curriculum in each school. The findings indicated that what had taken place reflected each curriculum leader's approach to developing the curriculum, highlighting its pragmatic nature and their capacity to be innovative. In this instance the complex set of curriculum guidance documents supporting the introduction of CfE has led to curriculum leaders engaging in pragmatic innovation.

The curriculum leaders were not, as teachers have been characterised in some earlier accounts of curriculum development, passive recipients of curriculum, or in some of Ball's (1993, 2003) accounts manipulated by the

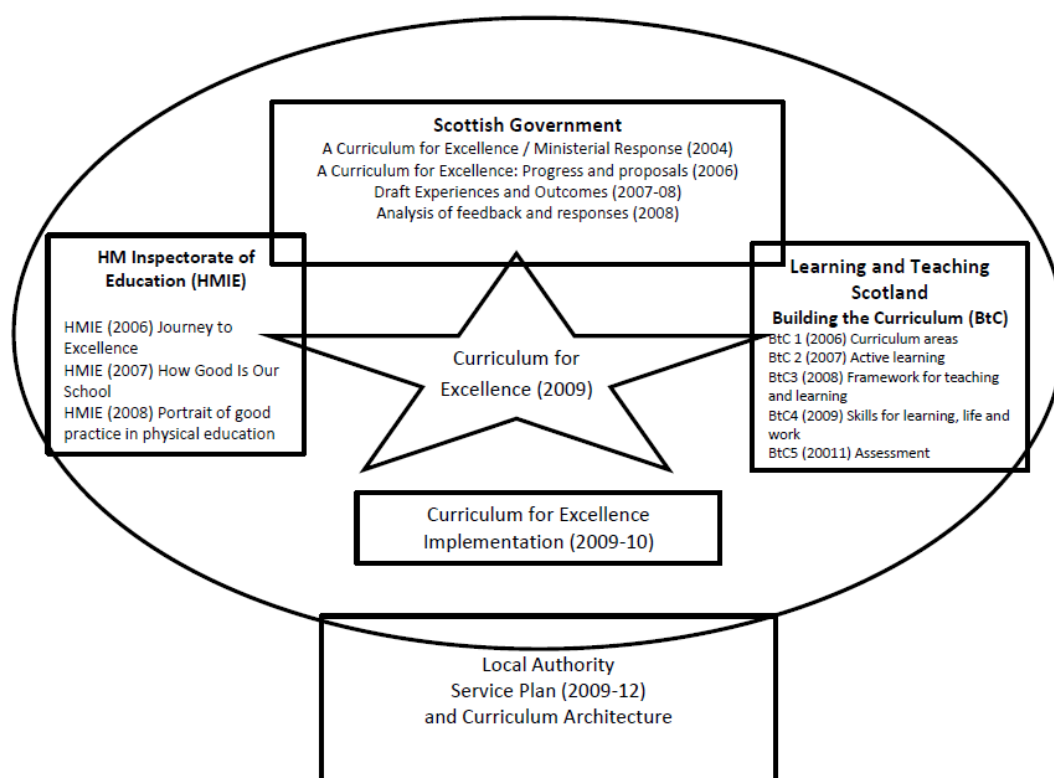
policy process. The findings showed that curriculum leaders could, and did, exercise their professional judgment as the framework afforded them a degree of freedom to make their own decisions. Within the framework of CfE, they had a degree of freedom to plan and the findings indicated that changes were made to the curriculum. To a certain extent, curriculum leaders were free to interpret and reinterpret CfE within the context of their school. Therefore, this study highlights that in contrast to previous accounts of curriculum development teachers were active in the process of curriculum development for their local context. They developed their understanding of their role in SBCD by reading CfE documentation, Local Authority guidance and engaging in a professional learning community (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007; Curtner-Smith, 1999; Kirk, 1990; Scott, 2000).

### **7.3 The context of curriculum development**

The diagrammatic representation of the policy context provided in Figure 7-1, indicates key documents that teachers reported reading and the date of their publication. The curriculum guidance and documents provided by the Scottish government, HMIE and Learning and Teaching Scotland patterned and shaped SBCD. In April 2009, CfE emerged from the policy process. As part of Terrane Local Authority's approach to supporting the introduction of CfE for the beginning of the school year in August 2010, it created two documents (Service Plan and Curriculum Architecture) that outlined their strategy. The three HMIE publications included in figure 7-1 are important

reference points for the analysis of how SBCD was patterned by the management teams in the nine schools and how the curriculum leaders perceived the inspection process.

In the findings, the issue of school inspection emerged as a strong theme. The school inspection framework published in 2007 remained in place unaltered after the publication of CfE in 2009 (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a; Scottish Government, 2009a).



**Figure 7-1 The policy context for SBCD**

Guidance contained in 'CfE: Progress and Proposals' advocated a rebuilding of the curriculum based on engaging teachers 'in thinking from first principles about their educational aims and values and their classroom practice' (Scottish Executive, 2006, p.4). Curriculum leaders indicated that although they reflected on their role and were active in the process of SBCD, the professional development and time required to engage in creating the curriculum as a whole and more specifically the physical education curriculum from first principles was restricted. The nine curriculum leaders had limited time, information and opportunities for sustained professional learning to support the development of the curriculum from first principles.

The other factor that strongly shaped first order SBCD was their perception that regimes of accountability and attainment, had not radically altered. The mutually reinforcing nature of the targets for attainment set by the Scottish Government, the inspection system operated by HMIE and the targets set by the Local Authority contained in the Service Plan patterned the teachers' thinking and actions (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b). Curriculum leaders were quite clearly aware of, and responsive to, the focus on attainment in the creation of the curriculum, however the findings also suggest that they were not solely concerned with attainment. The way that CfE was developed, framed and presented did appear to engage curriculum leaders in the process of SBCD in ways that were not wholly related to accountability and attainment.

### **7.3.1 The shaping of the teachers' role in SBCD**

CfE was not written or created with the intention that it would be what Kelly (2009) has referred to as 'teacher proof'. During the development of CfE the Scottish Executive (2006), HMIE (2007a) and then the Scottish Government (2008a) sought to present CfE as a transformational curriculum; change in education was seen as necessary to raise the standards of education. This drive to reform education is reflective of trends around the world (Saha & Dworkin, 2009). There is a growing consensus that current developments in education reflect nation states' desire to prepare, position and respond to what has been called the global knowledge economy (Hargreaves, 2003; Lingard & Sellar, 2013; Trowler, 2003; Wheelahan, 2010).

CfE is the Scottish Government's response to the pervasive discourse from supra-national bodies, such as the OECD, that education needs to reform to respond to the global knowledge economy (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2007). Research on the impact of educational reform on teachers' conditions of work has revealed what Ball (2003) and others have characterised as the terror of performativity and its divisive and counterproductive effect on teachers' ability to enact educational change and their resistance to change (Boote, 2006; Doherty & McMahon, 2007; Maguire et al., 2011; Storey, 2007). In the context of this study it is therefore significant that in the framing of CfE the Scottish Executive/Government



(2004, 2006, 2008) sought to stress teachers' professionalism and their ability to make informed judgements about matters of curriculum and assessment. This bolstering of teachers' roles as change agents, contrasts with earlier approaches to policy implementation, which viewed teachers as recipients of policy, required to act to ensure fidelity with the curriculum as determined externally (Kelly, 2009). Fullan (1993b) has advocated that teachers are important drivers of educational change and the policy process should consider how to harness the personal vision of teachers when seeking to reform education. The writerly (Barthes, 1977) nature of the texts created by the Scottish Executive/Government did appear to provide affordances for teacher professionalism in matters of SBCD. This is in contrast to the picture that emerged from earlier analyses of curriculum guidance (Ball, 2003; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001; Kirk, 1990; Maguire & Ball, 1994; Sabatier, 1986; Zhu et al., 2011).

The curriculum leaders were broadly supportive of the development of CfE, indicating that as a curriculum framework it provided affordances for their personal vision of physical education. This matter is returned to when considering the location of physical education in health and wellbeing in section 7.7. First though it is necessary to consider how curriculum leaders engaged with national and local curriculum guidance. The following section provides an analysis of how the formation of a professional learning community supported SBCD within Terrane local authority.

### **7.3.2 Engaging teachers in SBCD**

The Scottish Government sought to bind in teachers as important actors in the change process; it was through their professional actions that CfE would transform education. In the development of CfE consultations with the educational community took place, and part of the narrative presented was that CfE embodied teachers' desire for professional autonomy (Baumfield et al., 2010; Munn et al., 2004; Scottish Executive, 2004a). This approach gives credence to Chan's (2012) analysis that 'top down' approaches or 'hard' policies focused on the implementation of curricula, are transforming into more nuanced 'soft' policies operating across areas of governance. The clear message in the curriculum guidance was that if the "fundamental principle is the need for all those involved in education to encourage a wide range of achievements for their pupils, as well as enabling high levels of attainment" (Scottish Executive, 2006b, p.2) then 'there is no alternative' (TINA) (BBC, 2010). The introduction of CfE was required and necessary. However, the approach to introducing the changes, and the documents carrying the guidance to develop the curriculum in each school that would secure high levels of attainment were not as prescriptive as reported in research examining other educational systems (Apple, 2011; Evans & Penney, 1992; Kelly, 2009; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001; Sabatier, 1986).

As the findings indicated, curriculum leader's response to the changes presented by CfE could be summarised as 'we are doing it already'. This reflected their view that CfE encapsulated the changes they had already been making following the shift to more learner focused approaches to teaching and learning. The earlier initiatives contained in *Assessment Is for Learning*, reported by Hutchison and Hayward (2005), were considered by curriculum leaders to have already transformed their approach to curriculum. Gray et al.'s (2012) study indicated that policy makers responsible for the creation of the HWB section of CfE thought it possible for teachers to address the 'big ideas' of CfE through existing approaches. However, this contrasted with the official policy discourse presented by HMIE (2007) and Scottish Government (Scottish Government, 2011a) which purported to bring about a transformational change in education.

In response to the discourse of change encapsulated in TINA ('there is no alternative'), the findings captured curriculum leaders response, which was - we are 'doing it already' (DIA). It is important to consider this in more depth as the perspective articulated by the curriculum leaders reflected not a response of resistance but one of engagement, of responsiveness, and reflected their ability to envision the future by considering previous experiences. This finding contrasts with some of the observations made by Scott (2000) that teachers often experience mediated forms of policy text. His research reported that some teachers are therefore unaware of changes to

policy and curriculum and made no attempt to amend their practice. The review also highlighted that previous studies have reported strategic compliance or only superficial change (Curtner-Smith, 1999; Johns, 2003; Maguire & Ball, 1994; McLaughlin, 1990; Sparkes, 1987; Zhu et al., 2011).

### **7.3.3 Curriculum leaders' engagement with policy texts**

Chapters 4 and 5 highlighted that as a result of their first hand reading and engagement in an emerging professional learning community, curriculum leaders possessed a detailed knowledge of CfE. There was clear evidence that the curriculum leaders were actively engaging in the process of SBCE. A primary feature of their engagement was their reading of CfE and associated texts. The phased development of CfE appears to have been more than an exercise in political strategy to avoid difficult headlines. There did appear to be an intention on the part of the key entities, Scottish Government, Learning and Teaching Scotland and HMIE to phase the advice provided for the development of CfE in schools (Education Scotland, 2011b). Their collective aim was to create a climate of reflection and engagement in the educational community, in a way that resonates with Boote's (2006) advocacy that teachers should have time for deliberations about matters of curriculum.

Given the extensive nature of the changes to the curriculum and the extended period of development for CfE it is understandable that the

curriculum leaders were well versed in the discourse of change associated with CfE. One aspect that appeared to resonate with the curriculum leaders was the overt attempt to broaden the nature of education and shift the focus on standards in secondary schools away from a narrow conception of academic attainment in National Qualifications. The Scottish Government focused on improving equality of opportunity and emphasised that 'a broad general education' would raise standards for all learners (Scottish Government, 2009, p.3).

This was the discourse that was strongly promoted, which contrasted with approaches associated with 'teacher proof' curricula, or the imposition of prescriptive regimes of external school inspection, or centrally imposed attainment targets at all levels of the education system (Kelly, 2009). The touchstone of Stenhouse's (1975) and Elliot's (1993) work on SBCD was a focus on education as a process. They also sought to free teachers from outcome focused curricular models characterised by external assessment of subject content, because in their view teachers should have the professional freedom to create the curriculum. CfE did to a certain extent provide schools with opportunities to engage in SBCD, but not in the way that Stenhouse (1975) or Elliot (1993) envisaged. Teachers' accounts highlighted that external regimes of accountability at Local Authority level and HMIE inspection very strongly patterned their view of what would be required of them.

The teachers' 'engagement and interpretation' of the curriculum guidance led to a 'reinterpretation' that the physical education curriculum they developed would need to address the broad aims of CfE. During the introduction of CfE they focused on what they perceived to be new developments, as they could envisage that these would become important areas to address for the purposes of inspection. Therefore, the teachers aimed to ensure that the curriculum they developed would; enable the four capacities to be 'delivered'; develop skills for learning, life and work; and provide opportunities for 'personalisation and choice'. The teachers were confident that they could develop curricula to address all of the statements for the experiences and outcomes for physical education within the HWB curriculum area. Their views developed over time, and although this was not a longitudinal study, it was possible to detect the importance of time in relation to their first and second order engagement in SBCD.

#### **7.3.4 Time**

The findings chapters have revealed some of the frustrations that teachers experienced in obtaining information on which to base their planning decisions. Teachers wanted to have more information about assessment and reporting procedures. They also expressed a degree of frustration that there was not enough time to read documents or engage in professional

development activities to inform their planning of the curriculum. An important contextual factor related to the introduction of CfE, which does not feature in previous research is that there was a phased release of documents related to CfE.

These documents provide a starting point for a continuous cycle of reflection, review and improvement which will actively involve young people, teachers and educators, parents, employers and the wider community. This is just the first stage. We are embarking together on a challenging process which will have a profound influence on our children's futures. (Scottish Executive, 2004a, p. 5)

There was a phased release of documents starting in 2004, and teachers reported engaging with the 'Building the Curriculum' series of documents which started to be published in 2006. The publication of curriculum guidance was in 2009, but '*Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*' was not published until 2010 (Scottish Government, 2010a). Teachers were clearly frustrated that they had to consider how to plan the curriculum without guidance on assessment. (More detailed discussion of this issue features in a following section) It is important to note what this study adds to the existing literature. Previous studies have indicated that a strong theme in curriculum development is the extent to which it is led by assessment. The approach the Scottish Government adopted contrasts with the findings of previous studies. It seemed to be part of a deliberate strategy to avoid assessment overshadowing the development of CfE. However, as will be discussed in the

next section the history and legacy of teachers concerns with accountability and attainment strongly patterned their approach to SBCD.

Time was also required by policymakers. The phased release of curriculum guidance reflected the scale of task the Scottish Government and other partners in the process were involved with as they worked to develop guidance for a 3-18 curriculum. The curriculum leaders wanted to have all of the information before they started the process of planning the curriculum in their school. However, there were constraints on the capacity of the working groups formed by Learning and Teaching Scotland and HMIE to carry out all of the consultations and development work to produce all of the 'Building the Curriculum', HMIE reports to support the development of CfE. Teachers expressed frustrations with the policy process designed to enable more consultation with the profession. In their view it restricted rather than extended the time they had to do the work required in their school. The protracted period of development that followed the National Debate on Education in 2002 to the publication of new curriculum guidelines in 2009 is an important contextual factor to consider in understanding the actions of the curriculum leaders.

Curriculum leaders were aware of the guidance contained in 'Building the Curriculum 3' (Scottish Government, 2008a) but were not able to consider how best to introduce CfE until they were able to read the final publication of



the experiences and outcomes for CfE in April of 2009. Their planning to support the introduction of CfE was to be in place for August 2010 and, as reported by curriculum leaders, it was only in this period that Local Authorities and schools began to engage in an intensive period of SBCD. In this period, against the backdrop of the pressures associated with their day-to-day role in schools they sought to engage with and digest all of the information they needed to design and create a fully formed curriculum (Education Scotland, 2011b).

### **7.3.5 The nature of policy guidance**

Curriculum leaders were reading curriculum guidance and actively considering the context they were working in. They had limited time available for curriculum development and to some extent this seemed to pattern their engagement with the process, leading to the auditing of existing practice against the experiences and outcomes contained in CfE (2009b). This practice of auditing could be considered to run counter to the advice contained in 'Building the Curriculum 3' which advocated that teachers 'think imaginatively about how the experiences and outcomes might be organised and planned for in creative ways which encourage deep, sustained learning and which meet the needs of children and young people' (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 20). The guidance created for CfE was 'writerly', actively encouraging an interpretation of text to bring the policy aspirations to life within each school. However, the pressures of time and the affordances

provided to teachers enabled existing practice to be reinterpreted against the emerging narratives created by CfE about educational practice.

The emergence of a 'softer' form of policy document is described by Chan (2012) and appeared to result in curriculum leaders' assessment that existing practice was consistent with the four capacities and therefore lessened the requirement for reimagining the curriculum from first principles. At one level curriculum leaders clearly articulated that time and the opportunities for professional development were insufficient to support a more detailed reconstruction and reimagining of the curriculum. In their accounts it was also evident that because of the affordances in the language of CfE, when they conducted their audits of existing practice they felt that they could cover, or were already 'covering', the experiences and outcomes without a radical revision to the existing curriculum.

A shaping contextual factor was that the touchstone for the inspection process '*How good is our school?*' (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a) was published prior to 'Building the Curriculum 3' (Scottish Government, 2008a) and CfE (Scottish Government, 2009). As '*How good is our school?*' (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a) was not revised after the publication of CfE and contained no specific reference to 'Health and wellbeing' it may account for curriculum leaders' focus on aspects that they perceived to reflect the requirements of external inspection. Given the prominence of inspection,

the participants in this study were familiar with HMIE's (2008b) portrayal of good practice. This document depicted that physical education could, and in many instances already did, embody CfE's 'capacities'; and it can reasonably be inferred that this portrayal will have had an influence on the curriculum leaders. Despite the prominence of policies such as 'Let's make Scotland more active' focused on health and wellbeing the inspection framework and CfE did not strongly steer this message; and as evidenced by the curriculum leaders' responses, the discourses surrounding attainment and accountability were stronger than those associated with 'transformational change' or 'Health and wellbeing' (NHS Scotland, 2009; Scottish Executive, 2002).

#### **7.4 Regimes of accountability**

Curriculum leaders were engaging in SBCD within a pre-existing regime of accountability in the form of school inspections and National Qualifications. HMIE conducted school inspections and if a school had been judged to be below the stated expectations outlined in '*How good is our school?*', then the Local Authority also conducted inspections (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a, 2008a). The study has found that there is a complex interaction between the agency that teachers can exercise in the development of the curriculum, and the extent to which external inspection and the measurement of pupil attainment in examinations is perceived to constrain their agency.

In a similar way, the Scottish Government empowers and positions Local Authorities to support the development of the curriculum in schools, however via the Concordant agreement the Scottish Government has determined what constitutes 'delivery' of externally determined Single Outcome Agreements. The strategic objectives in Terrane Service Plan (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b) reinforced for school management teams that maximising attainment in national qualifications was a priority. Curriculum leaders therefore had a dual role to perform, developing a new curriculum whilst ensuring that attainment in existing national qualifications was maintained or improved.

As Bernstein<sup>19</sup> (2000) noted, assessment is one of the key message systems of educational discourse. Curriculum leaders were well versed in the importance of assessment. They reported that school management teams valued attainment, (requiring curriculum leaders to account for the levels of attainment in 'Highers'). Accordingly, they sought to know more about the expectations related to the assessment of levels within CfE. It was a source of frustration for curriculum leaders that the guidance pertaining to the

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to acknowledge the important contribution that Bernstein's (2000) conceptualisation of pedagogic device has had in helping other scholars to understand the processes of educational change. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that an exploration of Bernstein's (2000) concept of communicative practices may provide further opportunities to consider how teachers engage in curriculum development. In the context of this research, however, rather than impose a framework for analysis drawing on Bernstein's (2000) work, the study sought to engage with the perspectives of the teachers interviewed, and a conscious decision was made not to undertake an analysis of the data focusing on the analytical language of instructional and regulative discourse.

assessment of experiences and outcomes was the fifth and final document of the 'Building the Curriculum' series to be published in June 2010, before the introduction of CfE in August 2010 (Scottish Government, 2010a). This gave the curriculum leaders very little opportunity to act on its advice when developing their approaches to assessment, something that they considered to be central to their role.

#### **7.4.1 Assessment, attainment and new qualifications**

An important feature of SBCD in this study was the uncertainty teachers reported regarding assessment. They wanted clearer guidance about the procedures for recording and reporting assessment decisions. Perceiving the development of approaches unique to their context to be time consuming, equally they were wary that there would not be a later judgement that there was a preferred approach by the inspectorate. The challenge teachers faced in developing a curriculum which adhered to the design principle of 'continuity and progression' when there was no information about new National Qualifications in physical education was a clearly articulated concern shaping and constraining SBCD. The Scottish Government had made a conscious decision to release guidance on assessment late in the process, based on its view that assessment practices should not drive the curriculum. This decision coupled with curriculum leaders' uncertainty about the nature of the National Qualifications, presented curriculum leaders with a significant challenge.

Curriculum leaders were aware that there would be a sustained period of change in secondary schools. They would need to engage in curriculum development at all levels of secondary education (S1-S6) and be responsive to the experiences planned for children in primary schools as these might also have implications for the curriculum. They were encouraged to trust their professional judgment on matters of assessment, whilst being aware further guidance would follow on assessment, which might necessitate changes to their locally adopted approach. Giving the importance of attainment in external assessments, the introduction of new National Qualifications for the senior phase of secondary education (S3-S6) would increase their workload in the years to come.

The curriculum leaders' accounts strongly suggested that whilst they were capable of engaging in internal processes of self-evaluation related to SBCD, they were aware that they continued to be accountable to external stakeholders. Eisner (2005) suggested that a constraint on the extent to which teachers engage with change relates to their concerns over who is accountable for the consequences of changes to educational policy. If teachers 'are given the authority to change local educational policy in their schools, will they assume responsibility for the consequences of these policies?' (Eisner, 2005, p. 142). The Scottish Government's decision to phase the release of the guidance documents so that 'Assessment' was the

last of the series focused on 'Building the Curriculum' perhaps was in alignment with their view that CfE was to move beyond concerns of summative assessment. However, assessment was an issue that curriculum leaders repeatedly raised in their responses, serving to highlight the powerful influence that issues of assessment had on their thinking.

Assessment is tied to regimes of accountability and what this study shows is that these patterned not only curriculum leaders' thinking but the organization of the school as a whole, via the timetable and curriculum structures.

Bernstein's (2000) research drew into sharp focus the power of the three message systems of education; curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and in this analysis of the introduction of CfE it continues to be relevant. There was an overt and pervasive concern with matters of assessment and accountability in the curriculum leaders' accounts of SBCD. The role the inspection framework played in shaping their thinking about what they needed to include in the curriculum was evident in the interviews. The curriculum leaders were not just aware of quality indicators, they had memorised specific numbers used in *'How good is our school?'* They knew that these quality indicators would be the reference points for internal conversations with other colleagues and would be the measure against which the curriculum and their teaching would be evaluated.

### **7.4.2 The inspection framework**

Schools and curriculum leaders were encouraged to develop the curriculum, and the inspection framework was an important reference point for their efforts. The inspection framework was aligned with CfE but it was published before CfE (2009), and therefore did not contain specific quality indicators directly related to statements of 'experiences and outcomes'. Judgements about the quality of the curriculum in a school were holistic, and stressed the importance of the four capacities. HMIE provided guidance for schools so they could improve their curriculum and consider 'Quality Indicator 5.1 The curriculum'. This document stated:

achieving the four capacities are the ultimate test of a high quality curriculum. The capacities (with their contributory attributes and capabilities) are included in QI 1.1: Improvements in performance and QI 2.1: Learners' experiences as important aspects of the outcomes and impact of a school or centre. (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2008a, p. 6)

This quotation highlights that the quality of the curriculum related to attainment. The first quality indicator in the inspection framework is concerned with 'Key performance outcomes' and the two sub-sections within it are '1.1 Improvements in performance' and '1.2 Fulfilment of statutory duties' (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2007a).



In the study, curriculum leaders were acutely aware of how senior management valued attainment, and this translated into attainment in external examinations and the requirement to assess against levels for CfE. As the curriculum leaders introduced CfE, they had a dual focus; an ongoing requirement to promoting attainment, and developing a curriculum that would address the four capacities through the 'experiences and outcomes'. Curriculum leaders' desire to ensure that they 'ticked' the boxes was evident in the auditing approach reported in the findings. Their starting point for curriculum development was to determine to what extent the existing curriculum would provide evidence that they were fulfilling their 'statutory duties'.

Although the findings indicated that regimes of accountability did pattern and shape SBCD, there was evidence that it did not determine what took place in the nine schools. Only four of the nine schools were 'compliant' with the guidance to provide two hours of physical education<sup>20</sup>. In each school the senior management team could exercise autonomy, to a degree, to enact or resist the curriculum guidance from Scottish Government and Terrane Local Authority about the amount of time to allocate per week for physical education (Scottish Government, 2009a; Terrane Local Authority, 2009b). The study provides further evidence that schools are complex organisations. All of the nine secondary schools are in close geographical proximity, located in

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<sup>20</sup> The Scottish Government revised the guidance for curriculum time in 2011. The new commitment was to ensure by 2014, pupils benefited from two periods or at least 100 minutes in S1 to S4.

communities within one Local Authority. They all have a similar management structure, are subject to the same regimes of inspection, and yet there are notable differences. The organisation of the school day, the length of periods, the number of teachers available within the department, the number of pupils in each class and the facilities available were all factors that resulted in individual responses to the enactment of policy.

### **7.5 The role of the local authority**

The role of the Local Authority in shaping SBCE was visible in the curriculum leaders' accounts. As noted in the review of literature, the role of the state or policymakers has been a feature of previous research in the area of curriculum change and development (Apple, 2011; Knight, 1985; Skilbeck, 2005; Zhu et al., 2011). At the risk of overstating the point, there appeared to be no accounts in the literature pertaining to the study of the physical education curriculum of how an actor such as a Local Authority, (positioned between the state, policymakers and teachers), may assist with the development of curriculum. In contrast there are accounts of an absence of policy hindering the development of curriculum and creating or reinforcing the marginalization of physical education in schools (Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2007; Hardman, 2008; Johns, 2005; Penney, 2008).

This thesis has explored the role that the Local Authority was perceived to have had in supporting SBCD. Hardman and Marshall (2000) noted that securing time for physical education is challenging even when national policy mandates a specific number of hours in the school day. Chapter 4 has reported that Terrane Local Authority set a target for schools below that stated in CfE for physical education (Terrane Local Authority, 2009b).

### **7.5.1 Curriculum time for physical education**

Although Terrane Local Authority would have been able to include guidance about the structure of the school day in the 'Curriculum Architecture' document, they did not seek to impose a curriculum structure on all schools (Terrane Local Authority, 2009a). The decision to reinterpret the guidance contained in CfE to provide 2hrs of physical education per week and set a lower target of 110 minutes per week in 2010/11 but rising to 120 minutes in 2011/12 in the Service Plan does suggest that there was a strategic objective to support increased time for physical education. However, despite the role the Local Authority played in the introduction of CfE the senior management team in schools retained the autonomy to determine matters of timetabling. This study discovered that curriculum time for S1 classes in physical education ranged from one 60 minute period at Amber school to three 50 minute periods which were blocked to create lessons of 150 minutes at Coral school.

The Local Authority's approach of steering through targets to increase curriculum time for physical education mirrored that of the Scottish Government. Curriculum leaders felt that it would have been desirable for the Local Authority to steer school management teams more directly, thereby securing 2hrs per week of curriculum time. Such an approach on the part of the Local Authority would have further complicated the discourses of professional discretion. CfE as a policy was both 'soft' and 'hard', it sought to engage teachers professional discretion in matters of curriculum, then in ways more consistent with 'hard' policy determined not just the minimum time for the allocation of physical education, but the experiences and outcomes as well (Chan, 2012).

### **7.5.2 HWB - not a 'responsibility of all' teachers**

Terrane Local Authority took the decision to focus on only one of the three areas identified as 'a responsibility of all' teachers in the first year of 'implementation', when they provided additional guidance for the development of literacy skills. Previous research has suggested that some of the challenges physical education teachers face in their day-to-day practice, reflect the perceptions of other colleagues within schools. Physical education is perceived to be a subject on the 'margins' of the curriculum as a result of the focus on academic attainment across the school (Hendry, 1975; Johns,

2003; Sparkes, Templin, & Schempp, 1990). More recently researchers have suggested that the development of HWB as 'a responsibility of all' has provided an opportunity for physical education to occupy a position within the curriculum that recognises its contribution to schooling more broadly (Penney et al., 2006; Thorburn et al., 2009).

International evidence has repeatedly suggested that policy focused on attainment in other areas of the curriculum (numeracy, literacy, science and technology) has inhibited change in physical education, which has made it difficult for teachers to find support for subject specific curriculum development (Doutis & Ward, 1999; Hardman, 2008; Zhu et al., 2011). For example, Bechtel and O'Sullivan's (2007) observations that policy inhibits change may have applied in the context of this study given the decision to focus on literacy skills. A more nuanced analysis has highlighted that the absence of additional policy guidance from Terrane Local Authority provided alternative conditions for practice and created 'affordances' for teachers. The teachers reported that schools were working to develop interdisciplinary learning across curriculum areas, for example, at Jade School, a course in basketball was linked to an English course, with a Sport Education (Metzler, 2011) approach in physical education providing a context for the development of literacy skills. Therefore, although there was no authority wide policy the national curriculum guidance provided the framework for 'bottom up' developments related to HWB as 'a responsibility of all'.

The teachers were aware that some of the whole school approaches adopted, such as a 'health week', were not in alignment with policy guidance. Katie's critical reflections on what had taken place at Sapphire School had prompted her to become a member of a school-wide interdisciplinary working group for HWB. The role of physical education in health promotion is complex and is considered to be an area of potential tension and opportunity for the subject (Cothran, McCaughtry, Kulinna, & Martin, 2006; Gard, 2004; Green & Thurston, 2002; Pate et al., 2006). This study was not able to pursue this line of enquiry, but it is an area where more research is required. Based on the limited insight provided here, it would be important to develop an appreciation of how physical education teachers work within schools to promote HWB across the curriculum.

### **7.5.3 Resources to support curriculum development**

The policy discourse carried the message that it was the responsibility of the Local Authority to support the development of CfE, but the findings indicated that curriculum leaders considered the support to be less than adequate in terms of time and financial resources. The Local Authority could not raise additional funds to assist with professional development or independently increase the numbers of staff in schools. They had no fiscal autonomy over council tax as a means to raise additional revenue to support curriculum

development beyond what was provided centrally. The Concordant agreement, which came into effect in 2007, froze council tax thereby closing off a potential source of funding (Scottish Government, 2007). The Scottish Government via the Concordant agreement provides direct funding to Local Authorities, but the loss of fiscal freedom and autonomy has been a source of concern for Local Authorities (Redford, 2010). They have increased autonomy to make decisions over the use of Scottish Government funding as 'ring fencing' has eased but they are in effect contracted to deliver on the fifteen 'Single Outcome Agreements' all of which make demands on funding resources (Scottish Government, 2007). So in a period of heightened curriculum change, the funding for curriculum development was restricted (Midwinter, 2008).

It is also important to note that running in parallel with the development and introduction of CfE were changes to the structures that supported Local Authorities, and reductions in staffing and budgets. Learning and Teaching Scotland and HMIE had 538 employees on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010 and a year later Education Scotland had 373 with more to be appointed, however the budget reduced from a combined £38.38 million to £31.95million (Buie, 2011). During the period of curriculum development there were reductions in the resources to support curriculum development. The Scottish Government did provide additional funding to assist with the development of CfE, however as Susan indicated budgetary controls meant that even when resources did appear

within the Local Authority it was particularly difficult to use them in a way that would support and enhance teacher development.

The primary resource to support curriculum development was time. It is evident from this study that Fullan's (1993b) description of moral purpose forming the core of teachers' work and vision was embodied in the efforts of these curriculum leaders. When teachers were asked to quantify the time they had spent on activities related to professional learning and curriculum development they were certain of only one figure. They were working in excess of the 35hrs of professional development outlined in the McCrone agreement (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2001). The limited opportunities available to engage in professional development to support SBCD in school time resulted in teachers investing their own time and reporting an increase in their workload. Earlier in this chapter positive reference has been made to the fact that the CfE documents were, in Barthes' terms 'writerly' texts (Barthes, 1977), which allowed teachers considerable scope in interpretation. At the same time, however, it needs to be acknowledged that the texts associated with the curriculum guidance were perceived by all of the teachers to lack clear statements to guide the process of creating the curriculum. Teachers repeatedly referred to the documents as 'vague'. Without strong steering, guidance or feedback mechanisms, the teachers felt they had to draw on their own resources and invest their time to engage in the sense making process required in first order SBCD.



#### **7.5.4 Support for curriculum development**

The support provided from Scottish Government and the Local Authority during the planning process prior to the introduction of CfE seemed to take on a rather ad hoc approach. The change in administration led to CfE being delayed by one year (Education Scotland, 2011a; Scottish Government, 2009c). Despite the delay of a year there remained concerns about the planned implementation of CfE in 2010-11. The Government's response was to phase the 'implementation' of CfE, from August 2010 the early years and the primary sector were to follow CfE. However, only the first year of secondary (S1) would be expected to be working within the framework. This proposal resulted in leaders of teaching unions calling for another period of delay. These were in part addressed the Minister for Education stressing that implementing CfE was always planned to be a phased development for secondary schools (BBC, 2010). This differentiated approach to 'implementation' reflected the tensions that secondary schools faced in adjusting to the shift away from subject based and content focused pedagogy. Cassidy (2013) indicated that HMIE asserted that interdisciplinary learning was already considered to be good practice and evident in primary schools. It was secondary schools that needed to transition to 21<sup>st</sup> Century pedagogical approaches and a curriculum framework that was more focused on the experiences and outcomes of students and the processes of learning.

The calls for further delays were resolved as Local Authorities received additional financial support and the promise of clarification of curriculum guidance so that teachers would be clearer about what would be 'excellent' about CfE through 'Excellence groups' (Scottish Government, 2011b). This report was published too late to be of any assistance to the teachers in this study, who were interviewed in 2009-2010 during the 'Planning and Implementation' phase (Education Scotland, 2011b). The points made in this short section serve to highlight that curriculum leaders had to engage in their own sense making practices to support curriculum development. This was because the systematic programme of teacher development advocated by Elliott (1993), McKernan (2008) and Stenhouse (1975) to support SBCD was not provided by; the Scottish government, the local authority, or Universities. A point for discussion taken up in the physical education and HWB section, is that teachers did not report engaging with research related to physical education. They reported learning from each other and reading curriculum guidance to learn about CfE. The next section explores in more detail how the curriculum leaders engaged in professional learning related to SBCD.

#### **7.5.5 Professional learning**

The role of the Local Authority in the initiation of the physical education meetings to which all curriculum leaders were invited had an impact on the process of curriculum development. An important caveat is that the study did not directly focus on how a professional learning community formed or the

specific nature of its interactions in the way that previous researchers have more comprehensively explored (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Hipp, Huffman, Pankake, & Olivier, 2008). Nevertheless, emerging from the findings is a strong indication that the professional development sessions and the informal professional networks formed between teachers provided a turning point for a number of teachers in the study and led to an increased engagement in SBCD.

Uncertainty characterised the period leading up to the introduction of CfE. Curriculum leaders were seeking reassurance and additional guidance about how to develop the curriculum. This is consistent with MacPhail's (2007) previous findings that when faced with imposed curriculum frameworks teachers expect support and materials to aid in the teaching of new courses. In contrast to the production of specific support materials reported in MacPhail's (2002, 2004, 2007) studies which in her view led to a deprofessionalisation of the teachers, Terrane Local Authority did not create specific support materials for HWB. What they did organise and support were CPD events prior to the introduction of CfE. In the context of this study, these events and the actions taken by Terrane Local Authority appear to have been significant in supporting teachers' professional learning. Teachers in the study reported that these events and the activities they engaged in before, during and after them were important professional learning experiences.

In contrast to the findings of Curtner-Smith (1999) the physical education teachers in this study wanted to know about the curriculum they were expected to teach. In part their desire to know related to their awareness of regimes of accountability and attainment, but importantly they reported the richness of their learning experiences which extended beyond an instrumental view of their practice. The teachers reported learning from colleagues and drawing on materials they had access to via the Wiki to support their professional learning. These teachers audited their existing curriculum using the specific guidance created by Dalradian and Moine Local Authorities for HWB. The curriculum leaders had sought out this material via their professional networks to support their curriculum development work. In creating a curriculum they wanted to learn from what others were doing. As the findings have shown, what each curriculum leader enacted in their school reflected their professional learning about CfE and was not restricted to following guidance from any one source.

Teachers were responsive and used materials created for other contexts in ways that showed their ability to fashion these materials to their own specific context. They were alert to the factors that might constrain what they could do, the curriculum time available, staff expertise or class sizes, but significantly they worked to exploit what they viewed as opportunities to improve the curriculum provided for learners. Drawing on their professional learning experiences, they sought to find approaches to address CfE that

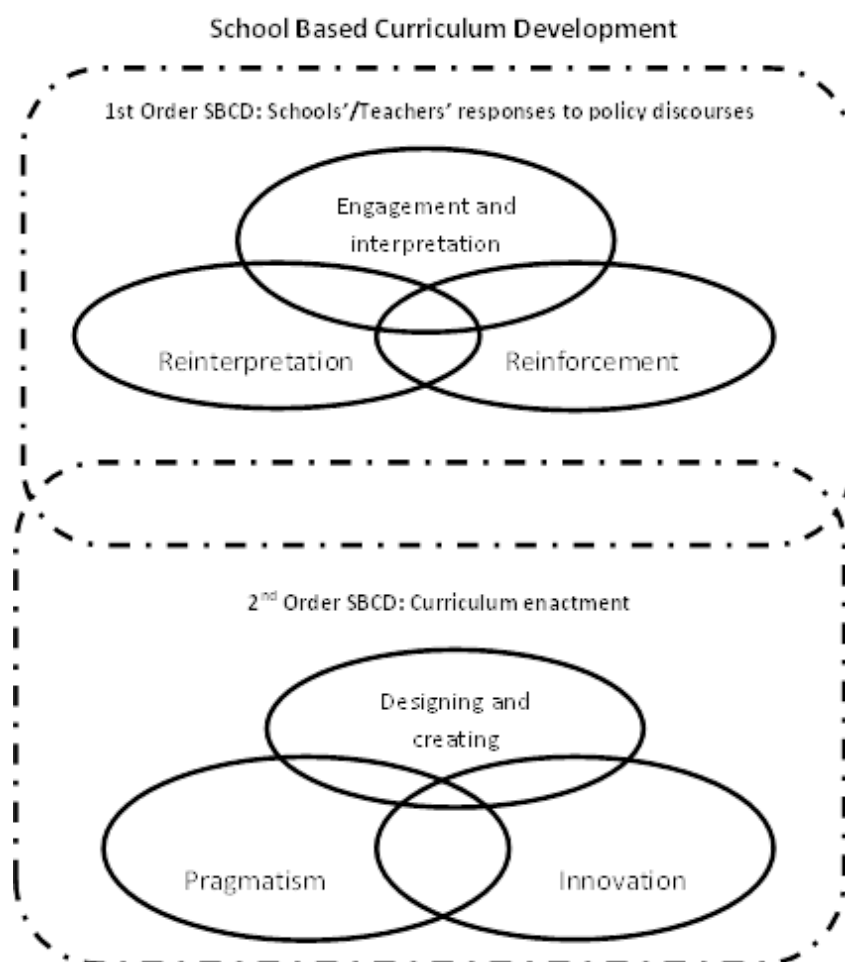
were well suited to, or could be modified to suit, their context. Therefore, what this study adds to the literature of curriculum development is that the CPD events did create affordances for teachers to engage in professional learning which supported SBCD. Curriculum leaders' engagement went beyond what has been reported as strategic compliance with policy associated with concern with self and regimes of external accountability (Angus, 2004; Ball, 2003; Giles, 2006; Mayo, Hoggett, & Miller, 2007).

## **7.6 Curriculum leaders' agency in school-based curriculum development**

The teachers and schools did appear to be engaged in an emergent social practice of SBCD. As noted, CfE and associated curriculum guidance provided affordances (Chemero, 2003) for teachers and the experiences and outcomes shaped, but importantly, did not determine what they planned to enact. There remained scope for agency and for professional discretion. Drawing on the points raised in Chapter 2, 'bottom-up' approaches to SBCD have tended to focus on the agency of teachers without giving due consideration and attention to the constraints of contextual conditions.

Chapter 4 has set out the contextual factors that patterned and shaped the actions of the teachers. At the same time, the chapter revealed that curriculum leaders exercised professional discretion as they sought to make sense of CfE. First order SBCD was shown to consist of a complex

interaction with policy documents. Curriculum leaders engaged and interpreted curriculum guidance, leading to a reinforcement of existing practice and a reinterpretation of what the 'big ideas' of CfE might mean for practice in physical education. Second order SBCD revealed what curriculum leaders sought to achieve in practice. The figure below merges figures 5-1 and 6-1, and brings into view the agency that curriculum leaders' exercised as they worked to develop a curriculum within the framework of CfE.



**Figure 7-2 Curriculum leaders' agency in SBCD**

The teachers' conditions of practice were not entirely of their own making and many factors pertaining to SBCD were outwith their direct sphere of influence. The pre-existing values, attitudes, norms and expertise that patterned and shaped teachers' interactions with the policy context, have been drawn more closely into focus. As noted in the review a 'top-down' approach to curriculum development marginalises the role of the teacher. The form of 'bottom-up' SBCD advocated by scholars, positions teachers working in schools as the key agents of curriculum development. However, SBCD takes place within a context not just of the school but society, and the accounts provided by McKernan (2008), Skilbeck (2005), and Stenhouse (1975) do not address the limited capacity teachers have to determine or control the resources (financial and material) required for schooling.

There has been a tendency for research on policy to adopt an implementation view of policy. This approach creates an illusion that the ideal form of the curriculum is already known, requiring 'appropriate' actions from teachers and schools (Kelly, 2009; Kimpston, 1985; Sabatier, 1986; van den Berg, 2002). The findings of this study provide further evidence that research seeking to predict and account for the outcomes or take up of policy is likely to present accounts that overestimate the ability of policy to shape actions (Spillane et al., 2002). This study presents a more nuanced view by way of

contrast to previous accounts, which have considered teacher's actions related to curriculum from a 'top down', or a 'bottom up' approach.

#### **7.6.1 'Implementing' a curriculum?**

"Implementation is not an inert, simple process of putting into practice some chosen educational change" (Olsen & Sexton, 2008, p. 12). As the findings have shown, educational change had its own effects and the changes to curriculum guidance mapped onto and became intertwined with teachers' conceptions of change. Consonant with Cothran's (2001) findings, the teachers in this study were active in the process of change. Cothran's (2001) research indicated that when teachers considered: the experiences of learners, their engagement, and the outcomes of the curriculum, this led them to initiate reforms to their physical education curriculum. However, a criticism of 'bottom-up' approaches is that they overestimate the discretion of the those engaged in curriculum change and fail to recognise sufficiently the constraints of their agency (McKernan, 2008; Sabatier, 1986). Contemporary research continues to indicate that there is a complex relationship between policy intentions and practitioners' actions.

Policy is very rarely implemented. Policy is rather transformed and mediated in the context of practice (Gray et al., 2012; Johns, 2003; Priestley, 2010b). The findings of this study support Adams's (2011, p. 61) analysis that when



policy is conceptualised as discourse there are a 'variety of representations from which action might be chosen'. In the context of this study the affordances in the policy guidance and texts enabled the teachers to interpret that what they were already doing would address CfE. The teachers were not 'implementing' policy. They were transforming the policy through their 'engagement and interpretation' of curriculum guidance.

The figure above provides a representation of the processes that took place during first order SBCD. The findings of this study contrast with aspects of existing perceptions of teachers' actions when presented with the task of reforming the curriculum. One issue for more detailed consideration relates to the processes that led to the teachers considering that the curriculum guidance provided 'reinforcement' of existing practices. Giles (2006) and Metzler, Lund, & Gurvitch (2008) suggest that when new curriculum conflicts with teachers' knowledge, values and beliefs about teaching, they can become very resistant to change. Consequently, teachers use what Sparkes (1987) described as rhetorical justifications, where they adopt the language of change, without actually changing their practice. As has been shown, the teachers in this study adopted the language of CfE. However, an important difference is that their use of terminology associated with CfE reflected their 'engagement and interpretation' of curriculum guidance. It was through the teachers' 'engagement and interpretation' of curriculum guidance that they came to hold the view that their aspirations for physical education and the

'experiences and outcomes' could be achieved through the curriculum they were planning.

The guidance contained in 'Building the Curriculum 3' suggested that 'good quality learning' was at the heart of CfE (Scottish Government, 2008a, p. 6). Teachers sought to provide 'good quality learning' and so CfE 'reinforced' their view that learning and teaching approaches were the key to developing the four capacities and 'skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work' (Scottish Executive, 2006b, p. 4). The teachers reported that they had to make sense of these statements as they developed the curriculum; therefore they were not 'implementing' the curriculum, they were seeking ways to engage with colleagues to address the aspirations associated with CfE.

Importantly, in this study the participants did not report that the content of the curriculum presented them with a challenge. The statement below from CfE outlined the contribution of 'physical education, physical activity and sport' to HWB.

Regular physical activity is essential for good health. Physical education should inspire and challenge children and young people to experience the joy of movement, to develop positive attitudes both individually and as part of a group and to enhance their quality of life through active living. This will give children and young people an important foundation for participation in experiences in physical activities and sport and in preparation for a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle. Children and young people will participate in and enjoy physical activity and sport, in addition to planned physical education sessions, at break times and lunchtimes, during travel and beyond the

school day. Outdoor learning can contribute to physical activity and enhance learning in different areas of the curriculum.

Taken together, the experiences and outcomes in physical education, physical activity and sport aim to establish the pattern of daily physical activity which, research has shown, is most likely to lead to sustained physical activity in adult life. (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 77)

This statement did not disrupt teachers' view of physical education; on the contrary, it provided 'reinforcement' that active living was attainable as a result of learners' engagement in the physical education curriculum. HWB may have been a newly formed curriculum area within CfE but the teachers stated that the physical education curriculum already contributed to HWB. Their auditing of the existing curriculum, reported in the findings, reinforced their view that the experiences and outcomes did not require a radical transformation of the curriculum.

Research and scholarship has repeatedly indicated that physical education teachers consider it possible to promote physical activity in lessons, which may establish a foundation for learners' engagement in physical activity throughout their lives (Bailey et al., 2009; Dunn, Andersen, & Jakicic, 1998; Green & Thurston, 2002; Hoffman & Harris, 2000). As the review of literature indicated there are strong critiques of physical education and calls for radical transformation of the subject (Ennis, 2006; Griffin, 1986; Kirk, 2010; Locke, 1992; Placek, 1983). Despite CfE's rhetoric of 'transformational change', the development of 'health and well-being' in the curriculum as 'a responsibility of

all' and the positioning of physical education within a newly created curriculum area of 'health and well-being' did not disrupt these teachers' views of physical education. They believed that 'good quality learning' experiences were already provided in the physical education curriculum they had developed in each school. As Gray et al (2012, p. 267) reported this view was endorsed by some of the writers of the HWB curriculum area of CfE as they indicated 'good teachers would not need to change their practice, that they were already delivering a curriculum that met with the expectations of physical education within HWB'. Although the teachers did not seek to radically transform physical education, they valued the potential of the subject to make a contribution to pupils' 'mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing' (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 79). Later sections of this chapter will focus more specifically on these issues, but at this point, it is important to highlight that the curriculum leaders' professional learning experiences developed their sense of agency as they engaged directly with curriculum guidance and the processes of SBCE.

Rather than resisting change, or engaging in strategic compliance, this study presents a more nuanced view of the processes teachers undertake to make sense of policy (Ball et al., 2012; Kelly, 2009). The findings of this study showed that teachers did seek to effect change and that they sought to develop the curriculum in response to the introduction of CfE. These findings contrast with Curtner-Smith's (1999) study where 'top down' curriculum

change led to in his view to no change in planning from teachers. MacLean et al's (2015) recent study of physical education teachers in schools across Scotland stated; 'many teachers reported 'lip service' changes to current practice with little or no change'. The research approach adopted in this study, as presented in Chapter 3, engaged teachers in detailed discussions about the curriculum they had developed. This has afforded the opportunity to provide an alternative perspective, not restricted to first order engagement in curriculum change.

### **7.6.2 Reimagining the curriculum**

The findings indicated that teachers exercised their capacity for professional judgement; and this can be a collective activity, as there was evidence that teachers learned and engaged with others from across Scotland, within the Local Authority and within their department. Responding to change is challenging, and perhaps a more difficult endeavour than policymakers imagine (Gray et al., 2012; MacLean et al., 2015; Thorburn & Horrell, 2014). This study has revealed, in a way that Curtner-Smith's (1999) earlier study may not have captured, that teachers are under pressure to interpret, design and implement a new curriculum, whilst concurrently responding to other aspects of school life which do not diminish or abate in a period of curriculum reform. As Fullan (2003) has eloquently articulated 'change forces' operate outside and within schools, and although teachers can view themselves as

agents of change their ability to marshal the support to enact curriculum change relates to more than personal vision and a desire to effect changes.

Teachers' agency is patterned, shaped, enabled and constrained by the context they work within. Previous research findings suggest that when teachers are aware of how they will be held to account via internal and external inspection, this can reduce teachers' sense of autonomy and restrict innovation because of the fear of making mistakes (Priestley, Miller, Barrett, & Wallace, 2011; Wallace & Priestley, 2011). As the stated aim of CfE was to raise attainment, the teachers faced the task of introducing a new curriculum which they knew would be subject to inspection. Whilst this created a degree of uncertainty and a desire to ensure they developed the curriculum with an awareness of the inspection process, it did not lead to a uniform response across the nine schools. An advantage of this study's research design is that both interviews with teachers provided a unique insight into how they had engaged in national and local guidance for CfE. In particular, the second interview made it possible to discover what they planned to enact.

The study discovered that curriculum leaders' read and re-read curriculum guidance. They also engaged in professional learning activities so that they could come to understand what CfE would mean for their practice and how they might plan to introduce CfE. As already stated, CfE had not been written with the intention that teachers could use it as a lesson-by-lesson guide for

teaching. Teachers had to do more than implement CfE. They had to interpret the curriculum guidance related to CfE and then, as has been noted, come up with a 'reinterpretation' of CfE within their context.

The process of 'reinterpretation' captured in this study was complex and related to the ability of the teachers to consider skilfully how their physical education curriculum could address all of the policy aspirations of CfE within the context and resources available to them. The findings provide empirical support for Adams's (2011) thesis that the teacher is active in the process of curriculum development. Teachers sought to 'cover' the curriculum and 'tick the boxes' which at one level could have been interpreted as surface level compliance. However, this was only part of the process. In second order SBCD the teachers went beyond a rhetorical justification of existing curricula.

The teachers' reference points for their 'reinterpretation' of physical education were not located in academic journals or scholarship advocating specific curriculum models (Casey, 2014; Haerens et al., 2011; Metzler, 2011). The teachers engaged with policy guidance and professional networks to develop the curriculum. As noted, there is a strong critique of what takes place in the name of physical education in schools, allied to this are expectations that specific policy guidance or teachers' engagement with research will bring about changes so that the subject may achieve greater curriculum fidelity and close the research-practice gap (Casey, 2014; Kirk, 2013).

This study provides further evidence that it is possible to obtain alternative conceptions of teachers' practice in physical education (Enright, Hill, Sandford, & Gard, 2014). Rather than seeking to hold teachers to account, it is possible to have a more interpretive, appreciative enquiry recognising the constraints, such as timetabling, teachers face. As the study's findings have highlighted there are constraints on teachers' agency. The timetable each school followed patterned and shaped the development of curriculum and is an area which requires further discussion before considering what teachers planned to enact in physical education.

### **7.6.3 The timetable**

Studies considering curriculum time in physical education have reported the hours and minutes allocated, rather than researching the potential implications for teachers' agency in SBCD (Fairclough & Stratton, 1997; Hardman, 2008; Littlefield, Green, Forsyth, & Sharp, 2003). With a few notable exceptions the study of how senior management teams organise subjects in secondary schools is a neglected area of enquiry (Stibbs, 1984). The organisation of the school day was an important issue for teachers and had a direct bearing on the curriculum they could develop in their school. 'It may be a good idea, but you can't timetable it' could have been a line from one of the transcripts, and the point Stibbs (1984, p. 217) made is highly relevant to this study. Ideas



about the timetable in all but Coral school seemed to be about the allocation of time to suit competing demands for the most precious resource for learning, time.

Boyd (2008) explained that the McCrone agreement has also had an impact on shaping the school curriculum because of teachers' entitlement to 150 minutes of non-contact time. The working week of 27.5 hours divided by 33 periods of 50 minutes enables the efficient structuring of the school day and the accommodation of teachers' entitlements. Six of the nine schools operated 33 periods of 50mins per week. Kirk (2010) pointed up the atomisation of the curriculum that results from this segmentation of the school day and the influence that this has over the way that teachers think about physical education. In his account, the timetable only provided a constraint on teacher agency; there were no opportunities for affordances. Teachers were reduced to planning lessons with only superficial engagement with content being possible.

Eisner's (2005) observation about the undesirability of the fragmentation of learning is worth quoting at length:

One of the most problematic features in the organization of schools is the fact that they are structurally fragmented, especially at the secondary level. By structurally fragmented I refer to the fact that curricula are divided and organized into distinct subject matters that make it difficult for students to make connections between the subjects they study. In the United States, secondary school students will typically enroll in four to six subjects each semester. As a result,

teachers must teach within narrow time blocks. They teach four to seven classes each day, see 130 to 180 students each day; students must move every fifty minutes to another teacher who teaches them another subject. There is no occupation in American society in which workers must change jobs every fifty minutes, move to another location, and work under the direction of a different supervisor. Yet this is precisely what we ask of adolescents, hoping, at the same time, to provide them with a coherent educational program. (Eisner, 2005, p. 142)

This study has confirmed that although there is the same fragmented curriculum in these nine schools, it was still possible for teachers to consider approaches that connected lessons. A very important finding is that when the senior management team in Coral school wanted to effect change in response to concerns raised by HMIE about attainment, they changed their timetabling approach, thus altering the context for the whole curriculum and for physical education.

## **7.7 Physical education within health and well-being**

As the review identified, previous research has reported that when policy initiatives focus on health promotion teachers have been found to adopt practices are considered to be unlikely to enhance or promote long-term health. Although HWB as 'a responsibility of all' and HWB as a curriculum area were new developments, interestingly the teachers did not report that 'health' promotion would become their chief concern. In this respect, it is possible to state that this study's findings concur with previous research

pointing to a lack of 'curriculum fidelity' (Harris, 1994; Kimpston, 1985; Zhu et al., 2011). This line of argument would be based on a view that physical education should seek to develop, as advocated by Haerens et al. (2011), a health based approach. However, to advance such an argument would not faithfully present the actions of these teachers or the complexity of the structural conditions in which they worked.

The introduction of CfE did not lead to all these schools transforming the curriculum to develop courses seeking to maximise physical activity time or use fitness tests; to a degree these courses were already part of the curriculum. HWB as 'a responsibility for all' had a whole school focus and previous initiatives such as health promoting schools created discourses about health that were familiar to teachers. However, it is significant that there was no reported increased use of fitness testing or widespread adoption of 'HWB courses'. The findings of Green's (2000) study have relevance, as teachers reported that the physical education curriculum provided opportunities to enhance pupils' health. The teachers in this study also reported that their existing physical education curriculum provided opportunities for physical activity which would address areas of HWB, without the need for alteration. These widely held conceptions about the physical education curriculum are cause for concern, especially when set against Cale, Harris, and Chen's (2014) recent research which questions teachers' knowledge-base for engaging in health promotion.

Curriculum leaders expressed the belief that the physical education curriculum already addressed the four capacities of CfE. Their perceptions were consistent with the view HMIE outlined in their 2008 publication 'A Portrait of Good Practice in Physical Education' (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2008b). HMIE did not appear to set out an agenda for radical change to ensure that physical education focused on 'Health and wellbeing' or was radically transformed in the manner Kirk (2010) outlined. HMIE's intentions appear to have been to reassure teachers. This perhaps explains why curriculum leaders did not articulate any concerns that physical education required radical change or transformation. Their views appeared to indicate that through the development of their existing curriculum they could introduce CfE 'successfully'. The focus of the teachers appeared to be on the three strands of physical education within the HWB area of CfE.

Whilst there are calls for health-based pedagogical models within physical education the teachers did not seek to develop the curriculum by consulting academic research or learning about curriculum models used in other parts of the world (Haerens et al., 2011; Metzler, 2011; Pate et al., 2006). The curriculum leaders' first order SBCD led them to find their own approaches to addressing HWB. They were considering how physical education could address or 'cover' the four capacities.

Their responses reflected a perception that physical education as a subject area and its current activities were in alignment with CfE. They stated that physical activity was integral to well-being and that other elements of HWB within CfE (i.e. social emotional and mental health) were also addressed. The auditing of the curriculum that some teachers reported undertaking involved them in considering all of the experiences and outcomes, it was not restricted to just those in physical education. This 'tick box' approach was also identified by Priestley (2010a). It was an approach that had been recommended by Learning and Teaching Scotland as a starting point for reviewing the existing curriculum. For Priestley (2010a) auditing carried the inherent danger that teachers would not move beyond auditing. Whilst there was no evidence to suggest any of the schools dismantled the curriculum and went back to first principles, as advocated by 'Building the Curriculum 3', the teachers were focusing on how physical education could provide a context for developing the four capacities and providing personalisation and choice (Scottish Government, 2008a).

## **7.8 Enacting the curriculum: pragmatic innovation**

This study provides evidence to challenge the perception that change in education can take place in policy texts but not in practice. The teachers stated that their primary consideration was with 'movement skills, competencies and concepts' (Scottish Government, 2009a, p. 84), but this was not their only concern. In each school the teachers took ownership of the

curriculum developing what would “work” for their context of practice. Practical considerations patterned and shaped the curriculum. Curriculum time and the facilities available were important considerations. What emerged from the study as a whole, however, was a desire to improve connections across the curriculum and within physical education.

The teachers in this study resisted an overly biomedical orientation to curriculum. Their approach addressing broader educational concerns is more aligned with Penney’s (2008) concept of physical education as focusing on educational matters. The critique of the multi-activity model presented in the literature points to the disconnected nature of the learning experiences provided in lessons (Kirk, 2010). This study has provided evidence that the introduction of CfE led to the teachers considering how to connect ‘blocks’ through their focus on developing the four capacities.

The curriculum design principle that seemed to generate the greatest effect in terms of the physical education curriculum was ‘personalisation and choice’. One limitation of the study was that during data collection the researcher was not able to identify where the ‘concept’ of ‘pathways through, and within, physical education had come from’. The curriculum leaders worked with their schools but they were not isolated. They drew on professional networks within and beyond to Terrane Local Authority. They learned from each other and pragmatically altered what they developed in

their school context. Barry, James and John all reported that 'personalisation and choice' involved offering pathways through, and within, physical education, rather than simplistic choices on a block-by-block basis. This pragmatic innovation merits further research as the teachers were engaging in an approach that sought to connect what they considered, were core elements of physical education, namely its practical nature, to broader educational aims in a way that retained a focus on learning about the subject. This contrasts with approaches developed outwith schools which are claimed to provide a 'solution' to the deficiencies of the multi-activity model (Casey, 2014).

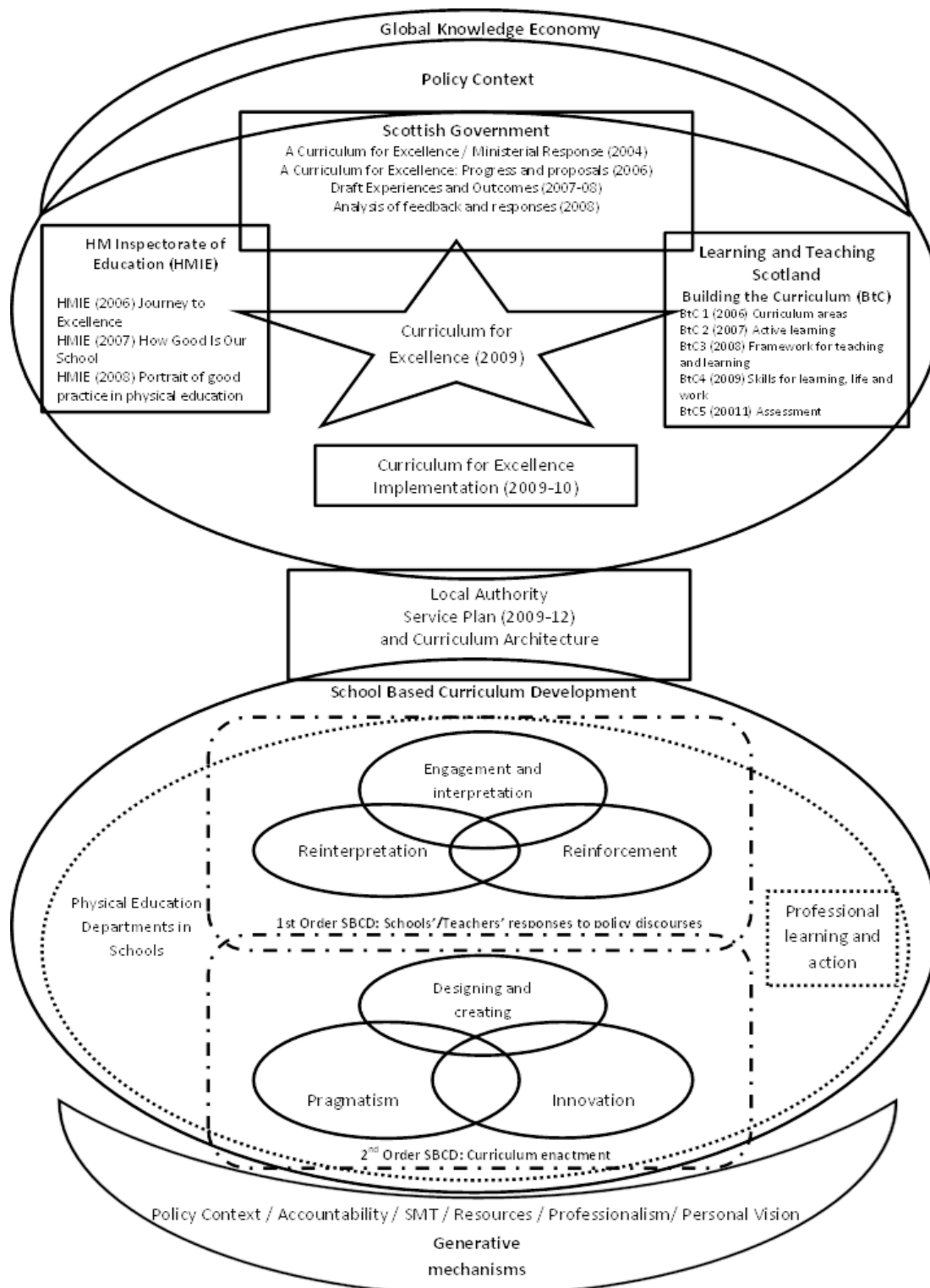
The final point to address in relation to pragmatic innovation returns to the issue of timetabling. In Kirk's (2010) critique of physical education he raises the packaging of the curriculum into 50 minute units as a possible explanation for the dominance of what he considers to be a sport techniques model of physical education. He argued that teachers find it difficult to conceive of alternative methods of learning and teaching within this limited timeframe. The introduction of CfE and the guidance to provide two hours per week of physical education did increase the time available for teachers. This action disrupted and created affordances for teachers, and is brought into focus when Coral's senior management team made a decision to create blocks of 150 minutes for physical education; this transformed what was possible, for teachers. The change to the timetable was generative, creating

an opportunity to develop the curriculum in ways that were not afforded to the other teachers. The findings have also pointed up how this school made creative use of offsite facilities and connected up the curriculum with activities taking place in the community, matters which have not featured in preceding literature.

## **7.9 A conceptual summary of school-based curriculum development**

The following model provides a conceptual summary of the study, drawing together analysis of the policy context for curriculum development in Scotland and a representation of the process of SBCD within the nine schools of Terrane Local Authority. It provides a conceptual map of the five key themes of this chapter.





**Figure 7-3 A conceptual representation of SBCD in Terrane Local Authority**

At the top of the model, the key driver for change within Scottish education has been the expressed desire of the Scottish Government to create a curriculum in CfE that will prepare citizens for a changing economic climate. The stated purpose of CfE was to develop a curriculum 'to ensure all our young people achieve successful outcomes and are equipped to contribute effectively to the Scottish economy and society, now and in the future' (Scottish Executive, 2004a, p. 6). The review and consultation process that preceded the publication of CfE sought to determine how education could create and contribute to Scottish society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Munn et al., 2004; Scottish Executive, 2004a). The outcome of this process was that education needed to address concerns that went beyond individual school subjects. The creation of the three overarching areas of numeracy, literacy and wellbeing reflected a shift from a curriculum focused on content knowledge to one where skills and capacities required for participation in a global knowledge economy were foregrounded.

Within the circle headed Policy Context all of the key policy documents that were produced to guide Local Authorities, School Senior Management and Curriculum Leaders in the creation of CfE are listed. The next box represents the action taken by Terrane Local Authority to create the Service Plan and the Curriculum Architecture, these were important documents for the senior management teams and teachers in Terrane.

To represent the intersection between all of the activities that were taking place in the nine schools related to SBCD this circle overlaps the box labelled 'Local Authority'. Within this circle the professional learning and actions of the curriculum leaders encompass first order and second order SBCD, with the dashed line indicating that these were related and connected processes. Within first and second order SBCD the key elements of the process are represented. In first order SBCD, the diagram shows that for all schools all of the three elements took place, with engagement and interpretation being the first activity that all curriculum leaders reported but the overlapping of the ovals indicates that there were varying degrees of reinforcement and reinterpretation. In a similar manner, in second order SBCD; the diagram shows that all curriculum leaders were engaged in designing and creating their enactment of CfE with varying degrees of pragmatism and innovation patterning their response to CfE.

Overall, the model captures what was outlined in the findings chapters, indicating key aspects of what produced, shaped, patterned and enabled SBCD in the nine schools. The ellipse at the bottom of the diagram sets out the central 'generative mechanisms' in SBCD and brings into view the interplay between different elements of the education system (Archer, 2003; Archer, 1995). The *policy context*, at least to a degree, created affordances for the teachers to develop the curriculum. However, *regimes of*

*accountability* strongly shaped what were considered by the local authority, school senior management and teachers to be priorities for development. Curriculum leaders' present actions in creating curriculum were influenced to a degree by how they envisaged future demands for accountability and expectations for pupil performance in examinations. In effect, there can be seen to be an important lack of alignment between the emphasis in CfE on health and well-being, and the quality indicators within the accountability mechanisms where it did not feature at all prominently.

Turning to *resources*, the planning undertaken by the curriculum leaders was shaped by their sense of the constraints and affordances of their schools' facilities for physical education and wider community resources. In each school the *senior management team* determined the amount of time that was available for physical education and crucially how this time was distributed across the timetable. They also controlled to an extent the resources required for school based curriculum development. The resource that teachers needed most was time: to make sense of national and local guidance; engage in professional learning; and undertake the work of developing the curriculum.

The manner in which these curriculum leaders engaged in first and second order SBCD was strongly driven by a sense that as *professionals* they had to engage wholeheartedly with the task. The findings have shown how they

engaged closely with curricula documents and invested considerable time and effort outwith the school day. Their actions also displayed their sense of professional responsibility to the school, pupils, and wider community.

The teachers' *personal visions* of how they could display a continuing commitment to the 'practical' nature of the subject **and** respond to the overarching aims of CfE led to *pragmatic innovation*. It was their capacity to envisage ways to develop the curriculum in ways that were well-attuned to their local context that drove their planning to bring about change.

### **7.10 Limitations and future research directions**

The Methodology chapter has set out how this study was underpinned by a critical realist theoretical framework. Consonant with this framework, there was a concern within this tightly-focused study of the thoughts and actions of a sample of curriculum leaders in a single local authority to delineate 'the complex interplay of experiences, agency, structure and curriculum development' (p. 72). This attention to 'local causality' means that caution needs to be exercised over generalising from the findings of this study to the processes of curriculum development in another context where different sets of factors may be in play. However, it can be argued that by adopting such a fine-grained focus the study has been able to give a more nuanced account of curriculum development than has appeared in much of the preceding

literature. Figure 7-3 has provided a conceptual map that may be of value in alerting future researchers to the range of factors, and the interconnections between these factors, that need to be kept in view when studying curriculum development.

The Methodology chapter gave a detailed description of the methods employed in the study, including the approaches to, and procedures of, analysis and the actions taken to ensure that a trustworthy account was achieved. The findings chapters have aimed to give a clear sense of the evidence on which claims have been made. Accordingly, it is hoped that the readers of this thesis will have been provided with a firm basis on which to form their own judgements of the study's strengths and limitations.

While judgements on strengths and limitations may vary, a number of clear limitations need to be acknowledged. Although there was a strong rationale for focusing the study on a sample of curriculum leaders, it cannot be assumed that their views and actions were necessarily representative of physical education teachers who were less centrally involved in the work of curriculum development. The study took place at a point in the introduction of this new curriculum where participants were able to reflect back on their engagement with curricular documents and describe the decision-making processes involved in the actual planning of the curriculum. However, it was not able to then go on to track how their efforts of *pragmatic innovation* were

actually working out in practice. Thus there appears to be a clear need to follow through on the current study by looking at how currently these schools' plans for the physical education curriculum have been brought to life and possibly reshaped by the members of their physical education departments. In particular, it will be of interest to see what 'operational' definition of 'health and wellbeing' is appearing in the enacted curriculum. With the introduction of new national qualifications, the trajectory of CfE has also moved in somewhat new directions; and it will be valuable to investigate how physical education teachers are responding to these changes (Brewer, 2013).

This study has focused on how teachers have understood the development of a new curriculum in physical education. The 'test' of this, or indeed any other, new curriculum can be seen to lie with how pupils understand and respond to it. Accordingly, large surveys, and more in-depth interview and observational studies would appear to be required to gain pupils' perspectives on the curriculum.

Moving beyond the scope of the development of this particular curriculum, it is felt that a strong case can be made for the value of the methodological approach to investigating curriculum development that was pursued in this study, underpinned as it was by critical realism and a concern with 'local causality'. Such an approach allows one to gain a clear-sighted overview of contextual constraints and affordances that can then inform policy and

practice. Gaining such an overview is also likely to lead to a more *appreciative* view of the efforts and professional commitment of teachers in taking ahead change within structures that may possibly considerably constrain their efforts.

A strong message emerging from this thesis is the central role that teachers themselves can, and do, play in creating curricula. This raises the question of how can teachers be best supported in this role of curriculum creation. There would seem to be considerable scope for research and development work that centres on investigating how teachers use professional networks to inform the work of curriculum planning and considers how professional collaboration could be strengthened and used to best effect. Effort could also be invested in examining how programmes of initial teacher education can prepare students to conceptualise the work of curriculum development and begin to develop the necessary skills that they can then build on throughout their career.





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## Appendices





## Appendix 1

### Schedule for interview one

#### Teacher Interview Schedule

The aim of the teacher interviews is to probe some of the answers from the questionnaire in more detail, particularly in relation to PE and curriculum change. My aspiration is to investigate how teachers understand PE within health and well-being, whether they think that there was a need for curriculum change, and how this relates to their own views about PE and the curriculum. I am also interested in the extent to which teachers feel they have been involved in the process of curriculum change.

<b>Q1 Teacher Background</b>  Could you tell me something about who you are, what you do, what your background is in relation to teaching PE?  (Post, age, years teaching, years in current school)	
<b>Q2 Curriculum Change (general)</b>  Q2.1 What is your understanding of the reasons for curricular change in Scotland?  Q2.2 Do you think that there was a need for change?	

<p>Q2.3 What do you think are the main changes to the curriculum? (just one or two)</p> <p>Q2.4 Are there any aspects of the new curriculum that you either agree or disagree with (positive or negative thoughts?)</p>	
<p><b>Q3 PE and curriculum change</b></p> <p>Q3.1 What is your own personal view about the nature and purpose of PE (broad then narrow)?</p> <p>Q3.2 What is your understanding of the notion of health and well-being?</p> <p>Q3.3 What is your understanding of the place of PE within health and well-being?</p> <p>Q3.4 What do you think the main changes to the PE curriculum are as a result of this new position? (Do you think that there was a need for change?)</p> <p>Q3.5 What is your view about the experiences and outcomes (positive and negative)?</p> <p>Q3.6 Does the position of PE within health and well-being fit or conflict with your own personal view of PE</p>	

<p><b>Q4 Impact on YOUR PE curriculum</b></p> <p>Q4.1 What changes are being made/will be made to your PE curriculum in order to meet with the demands of Health and Wellbeing?</p> <p>Q4.2 If no changes are being made, why?</p> <p>Q4.3 What do you think will be the strengths/weaknesses of the changes that are being made to the way your PE curriculum is being organised?</p>	
<p><b>Q5 Impact on YOUR teaching</b></p> <p>Q5.1 Do you think that the new curriculum will change the ways in which you deliver PE?</p> <p>Q5.2 If so, in what way? What has been the key factor in initiating this change?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>	
<p><b>Q6 Teacher involvement in the process of curriculum change (general)</b></p> <p>Q6.1 What do you know about the consultation process?</p> <p>Q6.2 Do you think that the voices of teachers were heard in the process of curriculum change (the development of a Curriculum for Excellence)?</p> <p>Q6.3 Do you think that it is important that teachers are consulted in such matters? Why?</p> <p>Q6.4 What is the role of the teacher in the curriculum development process?</p>	

<p><b>Q7 Teacher involvement in the process of curriculum change (specific)</b></p> <p>Q7.1 To what extent were you involved in the process of the development of PE within HWB?</p> <p>Q7.2 If you were involved, what was this involvement?</p> <p>Q7.3 If you were not involved, why do you think you were not involved?</p> <p>Q7.4 What events have you taken part in that have developed your knowledge and understanding of a curriculum for excellence and PE within health and well-being? (CPD opportunities)</p> <p>Q7.5 What are your thoughts, both positive and negative, about these events? (CPD opportunities) Q7.6 What could be done to improve CPD in this area?</p>	
<p><b>Q8 The Future of PE</b></p> <p>Q8.1 What impact do you think the place of PE within health and well-being will have on physical education in the future?</p>	
<p><b>Q9 Open response</b></p> <p>Q9.1 Is there anything that you would like to say or comment on that we have not discussed or raised already.</p>	

## Appendix 2

### Schedule for interview two

#### Curriculum design interview:

Initial conversation/discussion/questions about specific points raised in the 1<sup>st</sup> interview.

<p><b>Planning:</b></p> <p>Q1. Could you tell me what your starting point was for designing the PE curriculum in this school?</p> <p>Q2. Audit approach or first principles or hybrid?</p> <p>Q3. When did you start and what documents did you use? It would also be interesting to know what took place within the school.</p> <p>Q4. To what extent were curriculum planning principles outlined in the CfE something that you worked with:</p> <p>Challenges and enjoyment, Breadth, Progression, Depth, Personalisation and choice, Coherence, Relevance (Show prompt if needed)</p> <p>Q5. Have you taken account of the interdisciplinary aspects of CfE?</p>	
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<p>Q6. Have you planned specifically for the 'responsibilities for all' aspects outlined in the CfE?</p> <p>Q7. What is and or has been the best and worst aspect of the process?</p> <p>Q8. What is an 'experience' in a physical education lesson?</p> <p>How helpful has this been in planning the curriculum?</p>	
<p><b>Timetable/Structure</b></p> <p>Q9. Has the school timetable changed?</p> <p>Q10. How much time does PE have, are there specific HWB lessons, have you planned any of these?</p>	
<p><b>Curriculum Details/ Changes:</b></p> <p>Q11.What experiences have you planned for S1 pupils?</p> <p>Blocks, Units, Forms of pedagogy?</p> <p>Q12.At lesson level what are you trying to achieve in your planning?</p> <p>Q13.Is assessment part of the planning process, and what forms of assessment are you using within the PE curriculum?</p> <p>Q14.How has assessment, reporting or HMIE visits influenced your thinking, planning and approach?</p>	

<p><b>Professional Learning</b></p> <p>Q15.Has the department been involved with the development?</p> <p>Q16.How has this process been?</p> <p>Q17.Could you estimate the time spent on curriculum planning and design?</p> <p>Q18.Is this professionally challenging, engaging, enriching or infuriating?</p> <p>Q19.How would you characterize your experience of curriculum development?</p> <p>Q20.How important have the Local Authority CPD sessions been? The wiki that was developed? Are you sharing more information with other schools now?</p> <p>Q21.On reflection how would you assess your knowledge base for developing the curriculum?</p> <p>Q22.What have you learned in this process and how have you learned?</p> <p>Q23. What are the barriers to change? What has enabled change?</p>	